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ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

DELIVERED AT ST. ANDREW'S

IN

1872, 1875 AND 1877

BY

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

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PREFACE.

THESE Addresses and Sermons are connected chiefly by the circumstances under which they were delivered. But it is possible that the choice of subjects suggested by the common interests of two institutions at once so similar and so different as the Church of England and the Church of Scotland may give them an interest beyond any local and passing occasions.

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREW'S

ON MARCH 31, 1875

THE STUDY OF GREATNESS.

WHEN, twenty years ago, I first explored the historic scenes of St. Andrew's, under the guidance of the distinguished Principal of St. Mary's College, I well remember how he brought me into this ancient Library, and pointed out the inscription over our heads—Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν[1]—and told the story, familiar, we may be sure, to each successive generation of this place—how Lord Campbell, when a student of St. Andrew's, was fired by its winged words, with the early ambition of winning in the race of life the first post in his profession, which he ultimately achieved by becoming Lord High Chancellor of England.

The Homeric motto of St. Andrew's Library.

[1] Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων. *Iliad*, vi.

No doubt the Homeric line, if literally rendered, as by its most recent translator—

> To aim at highest honours, and surpass
> My comrades all—

contains the ordinary principle of hard-headed emulation and nothing more. But it is one of the many instances in which the spirit of a great poet, and, we may add, of a great language, breathes a far wider sense than the dry letter of a verbal translation can give.

In this impression of the whole passage I am confirmed by an interesting anecdote which I have been told of another Scotsman, more eminent than Lord Campbell. You will remember that pathetic epoch in the closing years of Walter Scott—which has been so well described by my dear friend Principal Shairp—when, on the eve of quitting his native air for Italy, he received at Abbotsford the renowned poet of the English Lakes, who was to immortalise those days in the finest piece of his noble lyrical trilogy—'Yarrow Revisited.' On that occasion William Wordsworth brought with him

a youthful kinsman[1]—then quite unconscious of his future close connexion with Scotland and St. Andrew's,—who, with all the ardour of an Oxford scholar, attempted to draw from his illustrious host the expression of an opinion regarding a new translation of Homer (that of Sotheby), which had just appeared. The old bard listened with his usual gracious condescension to the accomplished young Oxonian, and replied, 'Pope's "Iliad" is good enough for me. I am no Grecian, but I cannot conceive anything better than Pope's rendering of the advice given to Glaucus.' And then he repeated, with all the fervour of one who grasped, both in text and context, the full meaning at once of the ancient and the modern poet:—

> To stand the first in worth as in command;
> To add new honours to my native land;
> Before my eyes my mighty sires to place,
> And emulate the glories of our race.

That is the meaning which I propose to read in or beneath the motto of this Library.

[1] Charles Wordsworth, nephew of the Poet, and now Bishop of St. Andrew's.

Not merely the advantage of a hot competition for the prizes of fortune, but the advantage, especially in education, of admiring and appreciating that which transcends the ordinary course of life—that which is intended in the Apostolic precept by the word which we imperfectly render 'honest'—ὅσα σεμνὰ—'whatsoever things are grand, majestic, awful, venerable.' In all ages, but not least in this age of an equality which, together with its noble, has also its ignoble aspect—of a mediocrity which, no doubt, has its golden but also its leaden side, it is the function alike of teachers and taught to have their minds fixed not only on what is useful, sound, wise, and good, but on what is *great*, in institutions, in men, in books, in ideas, and in actions.

The Study of Greatness.

I. We are familiar with the inspiring force inherent in the consciousness of belonging to a great country or a great family. No doubt the smallest country, the humblest birth, can be transfigured by the character of those who adorn them. But the reverse is also true—

Great associations.

that the least and humblest of individuals can be transfigured by the grandeur of the associations which he inherits. And if perchance the strength of the individual character and of the position which is occupied coincide, a combination is produced which at once comes up to the ideal described by Homer. In the case of national grandeur, I need hardly recall to Scotsmen the force which the best traditions of the Scottish people breathed into characters, like those of the Cameronian regiment, 'who 'prayed as they fought, and fought as they 'prayed; who might be slain, never conquered; 'ready wherever their duty or their religion 'called them, with undaunted spirit and with 'great vivacity of mind, to encounter hardships, 'attempt great enterprises, despise dangers, and 'bravely rush to death or victory;' or again, like those of the settlers in Darien, whom Wesley found 'in sobriety, industry, frugality, 'patience, in sincerity and openness of behaviour, 'in justice, and mercy of all kinds, not content 'with exemplary kindness and friendship to one

'another, but extending it to the utmost of their 'ability to every stranger that came within their 'gates.'[1] Or, for the similar effects of ancestral greatness, if I turn southwards, let it be to an example familiar to many in this place. Had it been the fortune of this University to have selected my rival, if I may so call him, for the honourable office which I hold, and had any of you in consequence wandered as far as his princely domain in Hertfordshire, you would have there seen how truly the inheritor of the famous name of Cecil and of the historic halls of Hatfield has learned to 'emulate the glories of his race' and fill worthily a place in itself great. This same transforming influence, which we thus acknowledge with regard to a great country and a great family, we ought also to foster in regard to institutions. How often is an individual inspired with new motives, new powers, a new nature, by some high office which calls forth faculties of which those around him and he himself were ignorant! How

[1] *Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, pp. 82, 136.

closely are both the stability and the progress of our nation involved in the continuance of the complex elements of a constitution which once lost could not be restored, and which in other countries has been impatiently cast away. It is this which gives to such institutions at once their conservative and their regenerative force —conservative, because they act as the bulwark, the framework of the commonwealth— regenerative because they contain within themselves sources of fresh life, which it would be vain to seek elsewhere. The due appreciation of this double aspect combines what is best in both parties in the State. It is the glory of education to inspire, on the one hand, a reverential resolve to hand on national heirlooms unimpaired to the coming age. The duty to posterity, on which one[1] of the most eminent of my predecessors in this office so forcibly dwelt in his place in Parliament, combines with the love of antiquity to cherish all 'the links of natural piety' which bind the past to the future. But the very same appreciation

Great institutions.

[1] Mr. John Stuart Mill.

of greatness ought, on the other hand, to issue in the desire of correcting, enlarging, and completing that which only by such constant development can maintain its inherent strength. Well did the lamented Arthur Helps insist, in each province or department of the body politic, on the value of those whom he would not call by the aspiring name of 'reformers,' but by the more modest, though equally efficacious, name of 'improvers.' And the same result is equally brought out by observing how mean and paltry is the reverse policy. Equally removed from wise statesmanship, lofty patriotism, and true philosophy is the base content which lives in the presence of a great institution and is, on the one side, so little moved by it as to sit with folded hands, caring nothing for its fame or its usefulness—or, on the other side, acquiesces in its disappearance, its destruction, not from the heroic frenzy of the religious Reformers of the sixteenth, or of the philosophic enthusiasts of the eighteenth century, hoping to build something grander on its ruins, but

for the mere sake of destruction, or worse still, for the sake of raising a war-cry, or rallying a broken party, or regaining a lost place, or meeting the supposed exigencies of the passing hour, whether in Church or State, whether in education or politics.

Thus much we feel instinctively on the large scale of history. But we feel it also when exemplified in more familiar instances. And here I may be excused if for a few moments I fix your attention on the elements of greatness in the most obvious example—our own University of St. Andrew's.

The greatness of St. Andrew's.

I have said that it is an obvious example; but in fact it is the more impressive because in some respects it is not obvious. The University of St. Andrew's is not—as some measure greatness—a great University. It is indeed the smallest of all, in numbers, in influence, and in wealth. But in some of the elements of real grandeur it stands the first of the Universities of Scotland amongst the first of the historic localities of Great Britain. Look at its natural

features, which, unlike those of the English Universities, contained from the very beginning the germ of its subsequent fortunes. It is the eastern Land's End of Scotland, the counterpart of the romantic seat of the ancient British Primacy, the Western sanctuary of the Welsh St. David. Figure it to yourselves as it may be traced in its earlier nomenclature, when Magus Moor was still a wild morass, when its promontory was still the 'Muck Ross'—the 'headland' of the fierce 'wild boar' whose gigantic tusks were long hung over the altar of the cathedral. Look at the encircling rocks, the sandy beach, where the founders of your early civilisation stood at bay against the warriors who, hardly less fierce than the boars and wolves, came pouring down from the inland hills. Explore the caverns of the beetling cliffs, into which, according to the fine old legend, the bones of St. Andrew, first called of the Apostles, came drifting, without oar or sail, from the shores of Achaia, the type of the silent process by which Christian piety and Grecian culture were to penetrate at last

into these rugged coasts and illuminate these northern skies. In the rude outline of the chapel of Our Lady of the Rock we trace the last stand which the old Culdee worship, without development, without order, made in its latest struggle against the giant after-growth of mediæval civilisation which overshadowed and overwhelmed it. In that group of antique edifices, the Sanctuary or Cell of the Royal Mount (Kil-ry-Mont), unrivalled in the British Islands, save on the Rock of Cashel, thus concentrating in one focus on this extremity of Fife the successive stages of Northern ecclesiastical polity, we see the shifting of the pole of the religious and national life of the Scottish kingdom from the archipelago of the Celtic West to the shores of the Norse and German Ocean; transferring the stone of Fate from Dunstaffnage to the mound of Destiny at Scone; diverting the regal sepulchres from the wild graveyard of Iona to the Royal Abbey of Dunfermline; transforming the wandering mission of the Irish outlaw Columba into the settled hierarchy of

the Anglo-Norman Church of Margaret and David. Then comes that thrilling scene which the victorious Scotsman must ever recall with pride, and which even the vanquished Englishman must regard with admiration, when Robert Bruce came, with all the nobles of a restored and emancipated Scotland, to the consecration of the great Cathedral as the trophy and memorial of the triumph of Bannockburn, in which the patron saint of Scotland was supposed to have borne so conspicuous a part. Out of that union of ecclesiastical and patriotic splendour it came to pass that the Cross of St. Andrew, which after all the storms of nature and of man still remains sculptured on your mouldering walls, passed into the Royal banner of Scotland. In like manner the Primacy of St. Andrew's, at last bursting the yoke which had hitherto placed the Church of Scotland under the foreign dominion of the aspiring Prelates of Canterbury or York, became itself a pledge and badge of the independence of the nation. And then by that instinct, ineradicable alike in the

darkest and the most enlightened ages, of the natural union between religion and science, between liberty and learning, there sprang up under the shadow of the Metropolitan Cathedral, in the freed church of the freed kingdom of Scotland, the earliest of Scottish Universities. Well might the clergy of Scotland and the citizens of St. Andrew's celebrate with boisterous mirth of pipe and dance the day on which Henry Ogilvy brought from Spain the Papal Bull which was to establish the first native home of Scottish education. The peculiar prerogative of the Roman see, which in that period could alone confer this privilege, has now lost its vigour in every part of Christendom, Catholic and Protestant alike. The Pope who granted the Bull has fallen under the anathema of his own Church, and his place knows him no more. But the University which Benedict XIII. founded still lived on—and became henceforth the centre of a new life amidst the schisms of a divided Papacy and the decay of a falling hierarchy.

Nowhere in the whole of Europe was the battle between the spirit of the past and the spirit of the future fought out in closer quarters, or with more terrible tenacity, than when the new learning entrenched itself as in a fortress in the College of St. Leonard, and the old learning in that of St. Salvator; when the Cardinal in his pride of place looked down on the suffering Reformer beneath—when stern fanaticism struck those successive blows which slew one Primate in his seagirt castle, and the other, long afterwards, on the lonely moor. Nowhere did the rulers of a University play so mighty a part in the history of their country as Buchanan, and Melville, and Rutherford, who, from their chairs as Principals and Rectors, framed the new polity of Scotland. Nowhere, out of Wittenberg, did Academic students receive more heart-stirring counsel than those whom in his old age Knox drew to his side, and told them in language as much needed now as then, 'to use their 'time well—to know God and His work in

'their country—to stand by the good cause, 'and to follow the good examples and good 'instructions of their masters.'

I need not follow your history downwards to our own time. It is enough to have indicated thus briefly how various and how continuous has been the course of the religious and intellectual life of Scotland in this corner of the kingdom, from St. Rule, the anchorite, in his wave-beaten cavern, to Chalmers and Ferrier, Brewster and Forbes, teaching the latest results of theological and philosophical research. Other sacred and historic localities of your country have been long ago deserted by the stream of events. The White House of Ninian lies a stranded relic on the shores of Galloway. For nearly a thousand years the holy island of Iona has ceased to be 'the 'luminary of the Caledonian regions.' But this Temple, as of another Minerva, planted as on another storm-vexed Cape of Sunium—this secluded sanctuary of ancient wisdom—with the foamflakes of the Northern Ocean driving

through its streets, with the skeleton of its antique magnificence lifting up its gaunt arms into the sky—still carries on the tradition of its first beginnings. Two voices sound through it—'One is of the sea, one of the cathedral'—'each a mighty voice;' two inner corresponding voices also, which, in any institution that has endured and deserves to endure, must be heard in unison—the voice of a potent past, and the voice of an invigorating future. It is the boast on the gravestone of old John Wynram, who lies buried in the grass-grown cemetery of St. Leonard's, that through all the storms of the Reformation, '*conversis rebus*,' 'under the ruins of a world turned 'upside down,' he had remained the sub-prior of St. Andrew's. That same boast may still, in a nobler and wider sense than those words were used of that stubborn or pliant ecclesiastic, belong to the local genius of St. Andrew's, that through all the manifold changes of the Scottish Church—Culdee, Catholic, Protestant, Episcopalian, Presbyterian—its spiritual iden-

tity has never been altogether broken, its historical grandeur never wholly forfeited.

Doubtless this inheritance imposes on St. Andrew's, as on all ancient establishments, a corresponding duty. Doubtless, as in old days at Oxford, the colleges were exhorted to reinforce their resources by seeking out intellectual alliances 'even in Greece or Italy beyond the 'Po,' so it is the policy and privilege of St. Andrew's to welcome every new growth of knowledge or power, even though it comes from beyond the waters of the Tay, or of the Tweed. Doubtless numbers and wealth and activity, no less than splendid memories, are elements of academic grandeur, and the swarming multitudes of a vast city are in a certain sense, as has been truly said, 'great as with the sublimity of sea 'or of mountains.' Yet still the greatness of the greatest commercial cities is variable, transitory, and, if lost, to be regained elsewhere; but the inspiring atmosphere of a long academic past is a national treasure which cannot be abandoned and recalled at will. The hoary hairs of an

institution which reaches back for centuries are a crown of glory, which, amidst whatever infirmities, gives it at least one form of that pre-eminence—that exaltation above its fellows—which the Homeric verse describes.

Forgive me if I have dwelt too long on this example of a majestic and venerable foundation, in consideration of my grateful sense, not only of the honour you have done me in electing me as its Rector, but also of the delightful hours and days passed amidst its solemn ruins, and the roar of its winds and waves, and the stores of its ancient learning, and the genial converse of its living inmates. Forgive me, also, if I venture to say how it would be altogether without excuse if, among those who dwell amidst such influences, the taste for the poetic and historic aspects of human thought—above all for the poetry and the history of your own romantic country—should languish and pine ; if I urge that in such touching and refining appeals, as are here supplied, to the tragedy and the epic of human

life, is to be found the natural counterpoise to the hardening struggles and fierce competitions of this stirring and striving generation.

Great men.

II. I turn from the effect of greatness as embodied in institutions to greatness as embodied in men, in ideas, in books. No one can question the importance to the education of young men, or, indeed, of any men, to have seen with their eyes the example, to have received into their souls the influence, of characters or intellects that 'stand the first in worth as 'in command.' To have known, to have been guided by any such, is indeed one of the most precious of human opportunities; to have, for once in our lives, been penetrated by the awe, the thrill, the delight of sitting at the feet of one whom we instinctively felt to be a great man, in the historical sense of the word, is amongst the rare experiences which we feel, not the less, but the more keenly from the attrition of the ordinary conflicts of humanity. We know instinctively the characteristics of such pre-eminence. Wherever we recognise, singly

or combined, largeness of mind, or strength of character, or firmness of will, or fire of genius, or devoted loyalty, there is a born leader.[1] Such an one we ought to be prepared to hear even before he begins to speak. It is for the most part not he, but we, who are to blame if we fail to understand him. Whenever such a superior intelligence approves, either in teacher or scholar, we have our reward, though all meaner minds turn away from us. 'I looked 'around my audience,' said the old Grecian orator, 'and they had dwindled away—one 'only remained. But that one was Plato, and 'this was enough for me.' The heroes of mankind are the mountains, the highlands of the moral world. They diversify its monotony, they furnish the watershed of its history, as certainly as the Grampians, or the Alps, or the Andes which tower over the lowlands and fertilise the plains and divide the basins of the world of nature. They are the 'full-'welling fountain-heads of change,' as well as

[1] Bishop Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 'Great Men,' pp. 66–77.

the serene heights of repose. To be blind to this superiority, to be indifferent to these eminences, to think only of their defects or their angularities, is as depressing to the intellectual sense of beauty and worth as was that strange unconsciousness of physical grandeur which, in the last century, caused Oliver Goldsmith to prefer the continuous plain of Holland to the hills and rocks of which he complained as intercepting by their deformities the view of the unfortunate traveller in Scotland. To appreciate the glories of Shakspeare, or Newton, or Luther, or Wellington, to discriminate between the nobler materials of such natures as these, and the poorer stuff of which common mortals are composed, is as bracing to the moral and intellectual nerves as the newly-awakened enjoyment of Ben Nevis or of Mont Blanc is to the opening minds and active limbs of our latest born generation.

It falls to the lot only of a few to have an actual experience of living historical greatness. But it is the delight of a well-stored University

or library, that it brings us into direct intercourse with the great characters of the past; and it is a most useful corrective to confront the subtle speculations of our own brains with the great books which permit us to hold communion with the mighty dead, even more closely than had we been their contemporaries. 'Surely,' once exclaimed Sir John Herschel, 'if the worst 'of men were snatched into Paradise for only 'half-an-hour, he would come back the better 'for it.' Surely, we should also be the better, if, like Thomas the Rhymer, we were snatched away,—as we are in the brighter moments of our intellectual pursuits,—into the fairyland of the poets of old, or, like Dante in his vision, into those Elysian Fields, where we behold 'the 'Kings of those who know.' When we converse with those 'who saw life steadily and saw it 'whole,' we rise insensibly above ourselves, and 'prop our souls in these bad times' with an unfailing support. The study of the most famous authors, even in minute detail—even line by line and word by word—is amongst the most

Great books.

nourishing of intellectual repasts. The attempt to clothe the dry bones of philosophic theories with the flesh and blood which they wore in other days is the best mode of understanding both the difference and the likeness of ancient and of modern times. Remember the pregnant saying of Goethe—'There are many 'echoes in the world but few voices'—and let it be your constant effort to distinguish the voices from the echoes, and to respond accordingly. Insist on reading the great books, on marking the great events of the world. Then the little books may be left to take care of themselves; and the trivial incidents of passing politics and diplomacy may perish with the using. Bear in mind that in every branch of knowledge, scientific, or literary, or artistic, the first question to be asked is, Who is it that in that branch stands confessedly at the head? What is its chief oracle? Who is the ruling genius, head and shoulders above the rest? It is the master-works of the respective departments of study which are as it were the

Canonical, the Symbolical books of science and literature, established beyond appeal by their own intrinsic merits, and by the universal acceptance of mankind.

Great ideas.

Above all, endeavour to grasp the distinction between the great primary ideas and the small secondary ideas which jostle each other in the turmoil of thought. Remember that those ideas which reach far and wide, and which can be expressed in terms plain, intelligible, persuasive, to all educated men, claim at once a superiority above the technicalities of controversial or professional circles. We do not say that this largeness of thought and of language is a necessary test of truth. It may be that fine philosophic or poetic inspirations have come into the world wrapt in the swaddling-clothes of an enigma or in the obscure corners of a sect. No doubt there is a racy flavour inherent in the words and in the ideas of each particular country; there are local institutions which cannot be transplanted to other regions without perishing. But, as a

general rule, it is one of the best safeguards against narrow, impracticable, fantastic doctrines to test them by contrast and comparison with the lofty thoughts which belong to the literature of all times and all countries. There is much in the insularities of England and of Anglicanism which we do well to keep, though we can never expect our neighbours in France or Germany, or even in Scotland, to accept them. There are many Scotticisms of dialect, of humour, and of argument, which (reversing the saying of Sydney Smith) it would require a surgical operation to get into the head of an Englishman. But in order for our ideas to claim the character of universal principles and to demand universal acceptance, they must have a universal significance and a universal application; and therefore when we hear it maintained that there are doctrines which cannot be appreciated outside our own communion or nation, which are incomprehensible to the unintelligent or unregenerate natures which have their habitation, north or south of

the Tweed, as the case may be, we relinquish for such doctrines all hope of permanent triumph. Be sure that ideas which can only be expressed in the local slang or the dogmatic cant, of a province, or a party, or a school, or a sect, are ideas, perhaps of the second and third, but certainly not of the first, order of truth. Be sure that if they refuse to be conveyed except in one single form of expression, that single form of expression stands self-condemned, as well as the ideas which it represents. Be sure that the language of world-wide literature is the only fitting garb for those eternal and primary principles of which the Grecian poet has said in words which one of your own Professors has well rendered, that 'they have 'their foundation on high—all-embracing like 'their parent Heaven—neither did mortal infir- 'mity preside over their birth, nor shall forget- 'fulness ever lay them to sleep. There is in 'them a great divinity that grows not old.'[1]

[1] *Œdipus Tyrannus*, 865. (See Professor Campbell's edition, p. 186.)

Great teachers of theology.

III. There is one special sphere to which in this University, where so large a proportion of the students are destined for the sacred ministry of the Church, these remarks are specially applicable. Nowhere in education is the contemplation of greatness more fruitful of profitable lessons, more useful as a safeguard against popular errors, than in theology. It has been one of the main causes of the barrenness of Christian theology, as compared with the richness of the Christian religion, that the intellectual oracles of the Church have been too often looked for, not in those who, by God's peculiar grace, have been fitted 'to stand 'the first in worth as in command,' but in those who, by imperfect culture or meagre endowments, are entitled only to a very inferior place in the school of divine philosophy. Never was there sounder advice given to theological students than by one whose eminence, both as a theologian and as a man, enabled him to speak with a weight which time has only increased:— 'I would ask the theological student never to

'lay aside the greatest works of human genius,
'of whatever age or country. They are not so
'numerous as to overwhelm him; and whatever
'be his particular studies, some of them, whether
'philosophers, poets, or historians, should always
'be on his table and daily in his hand, till his
'mind, catching a portion of their excellence,
'is able to work with tenfold power on whatever
'subjects he may submit to it. And if for those
'great instructors he be content to leave un-
'opened many of the volumes which are now
'thought so essential to theological learning, let
'him not be afraid of the results of the exchange.
'Always supposing as the foundation a constant,
'critical, and devout study of the Scriptures
'themselves, and the use of those philological
'and antiquarian works which are essential, and
'alone essential, to the understanding of them,
'he will find that in the comparison of human
'works, both spiritually and intellectually, the
'works of the greatest minds will be most useful
'to him—that he may be well content to be
'ignorant even of Bull and Pearson, if he is thus

'enabled to become more intimately familiar 'with Bacon and Aristotle.'[1]

And when Arnold, speaking to English students, drew this contrast between the professed theologians of his own Church and the universal teachers of all Churches, he would not have refused to Scottish students in their lighter hours to vary the somewhat arid and thorny discussions in which at times the theology of Scotland has been absorbed by recurrence to those perennial springs of instruction which, on another occasion,[2] I ventured to place in the first ranks of Scottish theology —the wise humour, the sagacious penetration, the tender pathos of Robert Burns; the far-seeing toleration, the profound reverence, the critical insight into the various shades of religious thought and feeling, the moderation which 'turns to scorn the falsehood of ex-'tremes,' the lofty sense of Christian honour, purity, and justice, that breathes through every

[1] Arnold's *Sermons*, vol. iii., Preface, p. xxiii. I would commend the study of the whole Essay.

[2] *Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, 162–165.

volume of the romances of Walter Scott. You will not suppose that in thus commending the great works of secular genius I forget that neither in the secular nor the ecclesiastical sphere is mental power a guarantee for moral strength. I fully grant that Bacon may have been—though his latest biographer doubts it—not only 'the wisest and brightest,' but 'the meanest of mankind;' or that Burns, by his miserable weakness, was, as none knew better than himself, a beacon of melancholy warning, no less than of blazing light, to the youth of Scotland. You will not misunderstand me as if in the Christian minister, or indeed in the Christian man, it were well to exalt the intellectual above the spiritual and moral sphere. That has a grandeur of its own, on which, were this the time or place to speak, it would be easy to enlarge. Samuel Rutherford, who proudly said on his deathbed that 'in a few days more he should be where 'few kings and great folk come,' and whose bones sanctify with a new consecration the

Cathedral churchyard where he lies amongst you—Thomas Erskine, of Linlathen, who rests on the opposite promontory within sight of your towers, and with whom even a brief converse was for the moment to have one's conversation in heaven—these are memories of another kind, and strains of a higher mood, on which I cannot now more than touch. You will perceive that what I am urging is the necessity, the duty, the privilege of reserving our intellectual submission and veneration for the greater and not the lesser lights that God has placed in the intellectual firmament.

This and this only is the solution of the much-vexed question of authority. We are told, and truly told, that authority is needed for the guidance of the human spirit, for the mass of mankind that require not to lead, but to be led. But what authority? Is it the official authority of Popes, Councils, Bishops, Presbyters, Presbyteries?—is it the prescriptive authority of Fathers, or Refor-

Great authorities.

mers, or authors of Confessions and Catechisms, and long chains of authorised commentators? These all, no doubt, claim a certain deference according to their legal or historical weight. But the true, reasonable, and sufficient allegiance of the mind and intellect is due only to those far higher authorities which the world acknowledges without dispute, because their potent word carries its own conviction with it—because their 'vision and faculty divine' has seen what none others have seen—because their keen penetration and deep research have explored what none others have explored. Even in that Church which proclaims most loudly the theory of submission to official authority, that theory is often abandoned in practice almost as completely as if it had never been asserted. Not only has it of late been put forward by a famous divine of the Roman Church that the authority of the Pope must be controlled by the verifying faculty of conscience and private judgment, but in the long course of its eventful history it is not the

Bishops of Rome that have been the real oracles even of the Latin Church. In the whole range of the Papal succession there is not one who can find a place amongst the luminaries of all time, or to whom, however powerful in maintaining the privileges of his order, we can ascribe the solution of any of the wider and deeper problems which have occupied the attention of mankind. The guiding spirits of the early and of the middle ages were theologians of obscure sees, or students with no ecclesiastical rank; not an Innocent, or a Gregory, or a Pius, but Augustine, the pastor of a small African diocese, and Jerome, a secluded scholar in Palestine, and Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican professor of Naples, and Thomas à Kempis, an unknown canon in an almost unknown town of Germany. In the School of Theology, as represented in the frescoes of the Vatican, there is no single prelate or doctor whose voice reaches from pole to pole with anything like the same universal power as that of the great

lay poet of the 'Divine Comedy,' whom Raphael by a touch of genius as sagacious as it was bold has there introduced amongst them. It is indeed true that the high offices of Church and State may help to moderate the passions of their occupants, and to fill even ordinary men with a force beyond themselves. But still the voice which touches the heart and conscience of men with a persuasive and constraining authority is not that which speaks *ex cathedrâ*, but that which speaks from the far higher inspiration of personal gifts, of an heaven-sent grace or wisdom. We are not left in ignorance or uncertainty where to seek for such utterances. The concurrent voice of the civilised world has for the most part already pointed them out and accepted them. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

Greatness of the Bible.

And this same principle of natural selection applies to the Bible itself. We yield to its authority not only because it is the most sacred of all sacred oracles, but because it is the greatest of all great books. In no dog-

matic Confession, Greek, Roman, or Protestant, are these 'incomparable excellences' of the Bible so clearly set forth as in the Confession of the Faith of the Scottish Church.[1] Amongst the arguments 'whereby the Holy Scripture 'doth abundantly evidence itself to be the 'word of God are the heavenliness of the 'matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the ma-'jesty of the style, the consent of all the 'parts, the scope of the whole.' You will observe that these arguments all turn, not on the decrees of Council, Pope, or Fathers, nor yet on external signs of authority, but on the intrinsic evidence of moral and intellectual greatness; and amongst them one conspicuous and pervasive element is that 'majesty of style' which gives to the leading passages of the Bible a perpetuity and bloom of youth when so many of the inferior products of humanity have grown old and vanished away. It is because the study of the Scriptures cultivates in the popular mind this sense of true dignity

[1] *Confession of Faith*, i. 5.

and grace, this 'holy hope and high humility,' that even from a purely mental point of view it is so invaluable an instrument in popular education. Where this sense exists or is formed, there the mind overlooks and is proof against those grotesque extravagances, those debasing trivialities of form and speech, which have often disfigured the most zealous faith. The majesty of the Bible will touch hearts which even its holiness cannot move, and will awe minds which no argument can convince. The early chapters of Genesis contain many things at which the man of science may stumble; but none will question their unapproachable sublimity. The Book of Isaiah may furnish endless matter for the critic; but the more fastidious he is, the more freely will he acknowledge its magnificence of thought and diction. The authorship of the Four Gospels may be defended, attacked, and analysed interminably; but the whole world bows down before the grandeur of the Eight Beatitudes, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son,

and the Farewell Discourses, and the story of Gethsemane and Calvary.

Such an appreciation of the magnitude of the Bible will be alike instructive, both in comparison with other books and in comparing the differing parts of its own contents. We shall thus learn to treat calmly its relation to the gifted or venerated authors of other times, because we shall rest assured that whatever is truly great in them may be welcomed by us as part of the same Divine Truth which has appeared in a similar, albeit a loftier, form in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. We shall thus appreciate the importance of that doctrine of proportion [1] which is as necessary in sacred as it is in secular studies, and shall feel that one of the main duties of those scribes who have to 'bring out of the treasure-house things new and 'old,' great and small, is to have an eye exercised to discern between truths which are accidental, secondary, and temporary, and truths which are essential, primary, and eternal. We

[1] See Address II. p. 77.

shall thus distinguish statements which belong to the passing argument and external imagery of the sacred writer, from statements which are, as our forefathers used to say (though it may be with a somewhat different meaning), 'the sum 'and substance of saving doctrine.' We shall welcome without fear the keenest dissection and freest handling of the form, construction, and derivation of the letter, whether of the Scripture or of Confessions of Faith, if we are convinced that the true 'supernatural' is the inner spiritual life, which remains after criticism has done its best and its worst, and of which foes and friends may alike confess that

> We do it wrong, being so majestical,
> To offer it the show of violence—
> For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
> And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Great actions.

IV. It will not be thought unsuitable if from this wide survey and from these high subjects I come round again to yourselves, and speak of one more kind of greatness—the greatness of individual actions. Great in-

stitutions are not ours to make; great men are rare; great ideas are borne in upon us we know not how or whence. But great deeds are within the reach of all, and it should be a never-ceasing aim of genuine education to encourage the admiration and appreciation, not merely of actions that are good and wise, but of actions high-minded, large-minded, which embrace a sphere not narrow but wide, not mean but lofty, actions magnificent in quality, in purpose, and in effect.

Such are those instances of unselfish munificence which were the redeeming features of the violence and the ignorance of the Middle Ages. Henry Wardlaw and James Kennedy were not above their age in character or genius. But the public spirit, the thought for posterity, which they showed in the foundation of this University and its earliest colleges, were above themselves. Such again are those displays of unshaken conviction witnessed on this classic ground of the first martyrdoms of the Scottish Reformation. Patrick Hamilton

and George Wishart were not above their contemporaries in learning or in wisdom, but when Hamilton died in front of St. Salvator's College, and Wishart under the walls of Beaton's Palace, their deeds also were above their characters. 'The dead which they slew 'in their deaths were more than the dead which 'they had slain in their lives.' Such acts of splendid generosity, and of heroic sacrifice for conscience' sake, have not been unknown to modern Scotland. But still, in the face of the increasing temptation to contract munificence to the narrow limits of our own party or neighbourhood or family, or to ally the Pilgrim Faithful with the false companions Byends and Facing Bothways, it is well to look back to those shining lights of the heroic times. And without speaking of such wider and more visible manifestations of what in old English was styled the spirit 'exceedingly magnifical,' is it not possible that some group of college friends in this University may bind themselves together by a resolution like to that of a

circle of German students in the University of Göttingen, who in the year 1814, 'on a 'certain cheerful evening, made a vow to each 'other, that they would effect something great 'in their lives'? All of them did more or less fulfil that early vow, and one of that circle, in whose biography the incident is recorded,[1] was Bunsen, that marvellous example, in our times, of what an eager and resolute student could achieve.

None can foretell for himself or for others what great possibilities may be wrapt up in his future years. When Andrew Melville was a student in this college, John Douglas, who was Rector of the University, used to take the puny orphan youth between his knees, question him on his studies, and say, 'My 'silly fatherless and motherless boy, it's ill to 'witt what God may make of thee yet.'[2] I do not presume on the same familiarity; but I venture to say to the youngest, humblest

[1] *Bunsen's Life*, vol. i. p. 46.
[2] M'Crie's *Melville*, i. p. 13.

student here present—'It is hard to know 'what God will make of thee yet.'

And let us remember that this greatness of action depends on two other kinds of greatness—on our appreciation of the greatness of the manner of doing what is good, and our appreciation of the greatness of the occasion when it can be done.

Greatness of manner.

The 'grand style,' the 'great manner'—that is within our grasp, however distant it may seem. It has been well said by an eminent French writer, that the true calling of a Christian is not to do extraordinary things, but to do ordinary things in an extraordinary way. The most trivial tasks can be accomplished in a noble, gentle, regal spirit, which overrides and puts aside all petty, paltry feelings, and which elevates all little things. Whatever is affected, whatever is ostentatious, whatever is taken up from mere fashion, or party cry, that is small, vulgar, contemptible. Whatever springs from our own independent thought, whatever is modest, ge-

nuine, and transparent, whatever is deliberately pursued because it tends towards a grand result—that is noble, commanding, great. When one of your most illustrious scholars, George Buchanan, in his latter days was visited by that 'motherless, fatherless boy' whom I just now named, he was found teaching his serving-lad the alphabet. And when Melville wondered that he was engaged in so humble a work—'Better this,' said the old Preceptor of Princes, 'better this than stealing sheep, 'or sitting idle, which is as ill.' When they asked him to alter some detail in his History about the burial of David Rizzio that might offend the King, he asked, 'Tell me, man, if 'I have told the truth?' 'Yes, sir, I think so.' 'Then I will bide his feud [anger] and all 'his kin's. Pray, pray God for me, and He 'will direct me.' These were very homely matters, but the spirit in which they were touched was no less than imperial.

Greatness of occasion.

There is also the greatness of occasion. It sometimes happens that we can best illus-

trate the grandeur of an opportunity to be sought by our regret for an opportunity that is lost. One such we will give from the history of this place. Of all the names in ancient Scottish ecclesiastical history, there is none which has a more tragic interest than that of the young Alexander Stuart who was raised to the Archbishopric of St. Andrew's at the early age of eighteen by his father King James IV. He was the pupil of Erasmus, and that great man has left on record his profound admiration of the Scottish youth, who had been his companion and scholar in the stately old Italian city of Siena. Tall, dignified, graceful, with no blemish except the shortness of sight which he shared in common with many modern students—of gentle manners, playful humour, but keen as a hound in pursuit of knowledge, in history, theology, law, above all in the new Greek learning—an accomplished musician, a delightful talker, high-spirited and high-minded without haughtiness, religious without a particle of superstition—born to

command, yet born also to conciliate[1]—such according to Erasmus was the future Primate of Scotland. Already the University of St. Andrew's had felt the stimulus of his youthful energy; already the enlightened spirits of the North were beginning to breathe freely in the atmosphere in which he had himself been nourished. Had that young student of St. Andrew's (for so, although Archbishop, we may still call him)—had he lived to fulfil this wonderful promise — had he, with these rare gifts and rare opportunities, been spared to meet the impending crisis of the coming generation, instead of the worldly, intriguing, and profligate Beaton—had he been here enthroned in this venerable see, with the spirit of our own Colet in a higher post, the aspirations of our own More without his difficulties, ready to prepare the way for the first shock of the Reformation—what a chance for the ancient Church of this country! what an occasion of combining the best parts of the old

[1] Erasmus, *Opp.* ii. p. 554. (*Adagia* : Spartam nactus es, &c.)

with the best parts of the new! what a call, if indeed its doom had not been already fixed, to purify that corrupt Episcopacy! what a hope, if moderation in those times had been possible, of restraining the violence of the iconoclast reaction! But alas! he was slain by his father's side on the field of Flodden. Of all 'the flowers of the forest that were' there 'wede away,' surely none was more lovely, more precious than this young Marcellus of the Scottish Church. If he fell under the memorable charge of my namesake on that fatal day, may he accept thus late the lament which a kinsman of his foe would fain pour over his untimely bier.

But the opportunity which was opening before Alexander Stuart is not unlike that which is still open to us—and the spirit which would have guided his course is the same as that which for us is still no less indispensable. He was, as I have said, the pupil of Erasmus, who alone of his age combined what was then a world-wide knowledge with an insight into

those ideas of Christian truth which, as I have before said, are alone destined to be permanent. What there was in Knox and Buchanan and Andrew Melville, which belonged to their own peculiar time and circumstances—the fury of their indignation, the technical form of their creed, the narrowness of their party spirit—has passed away. That which we seek to rekindle from their ashes is the spark which they derived from the higher spirits of their time, whose language and whose aspirations are even more suited to us than to them. Erasmus and those who hold with him that the vital, inexhaustible element of Christianity is its moral and spiritual, as distinct from its formal or its emotional side, are called to the front, with an audience more willing to hear than Erasmus found. The penetration of new ideas into the whole fabric of belief and of social life—the insensible formation of a wider theology which shall embrace and vivify the forms of the past—the changes, whether for good or evil, which have lately been effected in the constitution

of the Church of Scotland—the changes which may possibly be impending over this ancient University itself—all give a zest, a stimulus, alike to the general and the particular career of those whom I address, of which the new and surpassing interest ought to compensate for the many perplexities and discouragements which such changes bring. The line of light which has been traced by a familiar hand [1] in this place through the succession of blameless and lofty spirits who, from Hooker to Butler, kept alive the 'rational theology' of England, indicates the pathway along which the faith, yes, and the philosophy, of Christendom must walk if it is to produce fruits worthy of the future. Is it too much to ask for the spirit and method of Erasmus, combined with the energy of Luther and Knox, with the repose of Fénelon and Leighton? Is it impossible that the enthusiasm which has hitherto been reserved for the coarser and narrower channels of scholastic doctrine may be turned into the broader,

[1] Principal Tulloch's *Rational Theology*.

vaster currents of a more Catholic, and, therefore, a more Evangelical faith than our predecessors have known? It may be hoped that if there have been times, when (to use well-known words), 'our nerves were irritated by 'trifles,' there shall also be times when 'great 'events' and great thoughts 'shall make us 'calm.' I would not unduly exaggerate the prospects of success or underrate the fears of failure in the attempt to attain a higher and more spiritual theology, a more patriotic and generous policy. The circumstances around us may often seem dismal, small, ignoble; the dwarfing, levelling, disturbing effect of partisanship and false popularity may seem almost irresistible. The 'rocks ahead' which Cassandra foresees are too visible amongst the breakers not to fill the stoutest hearts with alarm. Even thus, those who contend for long years in vain may reflect that the greatness of the end for which they strive is worth the bitterness of the disappointment—

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

'Tis better to have fought and lost
Than never to have fought at all.

But surely in the peculiar crisis of our age the game is still in our hands. We see clearly the enterprise before us. And when in that enterprise we consider how a few additional grains of charity would make all the difference—from how many mistakes we should be saved, by the simplest elements of common sense and self-control—how much our heat would gain by how slight an accession of light, how doubly the value of our light would be enhanced by how slight an infusion of heat, by how slight an addition of sweetness—what molehills of prejudice which a breath of truth might overturn, have been erected into what mountains of difficulty—what a fund of conciliation lies wrapped up in all larger views of science, of literature, and of the Bible—what noble paths of practice remain to be explored, unknown to former generations—then we may well turn to those other fine lines of the same Roman

poet, and take as our watchword, not the despairing words of the vanquished Cato, but the exulting words of the victorious Cæsar:—

> Spe trepido: haud unquam vidi tam magna daturos
> Tam prope me Superos: camporum limite parvo
> Absumus a votis.

Or if I may venture to present them in an English paraphrase—

I tremble not with terror, but with hope,
As the great day reveals its coming scope;
Never in earlier days, our hearts to cheer,
Have such bright gifts of Heaven been brought so near,
Nor ever has been kept the aspiring soul
By space so narrow from so grand a goal.

ADDRESS

TO THE STUDENTS OF ST. ANDREW'S

ON MARCH 16, 1877

THE HOPES OF THEOLOGY.

ON the occasion of my former address at St. Andrew's, the Principal of St. Mary's College asked me to speak a few words to the theological students under his charge. It was not within my power to comply with his request at that moment. But now that the time draws near to take farewell of an office which I have valued so highly, I have thought that I might properly touch on some subject which, though of general interest, had special reference to Theology. When I spoke to you before, I appealed to the motto which is written over this ancient hall, and dwelling on the inspiring force of the contemplation of GREATNESS in all its forms, I endeavoured to show how bright was the sunshine which such a thought throws on all your present duties and studies. That bright-

ness I would still wish to maintain, though within a more definite range, and in a humbler and graver tone, more suited to the altered circumstances both of him who speaks and of you who listen.

The topic which I propose to take is one at which I slightly hinted on my former visit, and which was suggested to me afresh by the instructive address delivered, in the course of the late winter, to the students of Aberdeen by an eminent statesman—one of the foremost of our time. He, speaking with the fulness of his varied experience, and with the strength of true humility and moderation, chose as his theme, 'The Rocks Ahead,' in the political and social world, indicated some years ago by a distinguished publicist. But besides the political and the economical rocks, there was a third rock, which the prophet of ill had pointed out, the religious or theological rock—namely, the danger arising to religion from the apparently increasing divergence between the intelligence and the faith of our time. It is this

The Rocks ahead.

The Theological Rock ahead.

topic—touched for a moment by Mr. Forster; handled more fully, but still in a rapid survey, by an accomplished countryman of your own, Mr. Grant Duff, at Edinburgh—on which I propose to insist more at length on the present occasion. You know the story of the Inchcape Rock, almost within sight of these shores; how for many years it was the terror of mariners until an enterprising Abbot of Aberbrothock ventured to fasten a bell upon the sunken reef. Will you permit the successor of the Abbots of Westminster, after the fashion of the Douglas of your own Scottish history, to attempt to 'bell this rock'? The waves of controversy and alarm will still doubtless dash over it; but, perchance, if my advice contains any truth, you will catch from time to time henceforth, amidst the roar of the billows, faint chimes of a more cheering music; and even if some rash rover shall tear off the signal of warning and encouragement, yet the rude shifts of the Abbot may suggest to some wiser and more scientific inventor to build on the rock a lighthouse which

will more effectually defy the storm, and more extensively illuminate the darkness of the time to come. I propose, then, to speak to you of the grounds of hope for the religion and theology of the future.

I do not deny that the forebodings of Mr. Greg have some foundation. It was one of the last anxious aspirations of Dean Milman,[1] that some means might be found to avert the wide and widening breach which he seemed to see between the thought and the religion of England. There has been an increasing suspicion which threatens more and more to embitter the fiercer factions of the ecclesiastical and the scientific world—each rejoicing to push the statements of its rival to the extremest consequences, and to place on them the worst possible construction. There have arisen new questions, which ancient theology has for the most part not even considered. There is an impetuosity on both sides, which to the sober sense of the preceding century was unknown,

[1] *History of the Jews*, 3rd edition, vol. i. p. xxxiv.

and which insists on the precipitation of conflicts, once cautiously avoided or quietly surmounted. There are also indications that we are passing through one of those periods of partial eclipse which from time to time retard the healthy progress of mankind. In the place of the abundant harvest of statesmanlike and poetic genius with which the nineteenth century opened, there have sprung up too often the lean and puny stalks blighted with the east wind. Of this wasting, withering influence modern theology has had its full share. Superstitions which seemed to have died away have returned with redoubled force; fantastic ideas of divine and human things, which the calm judgment of the last century, the Heaven-inspired insight of the dawn of this, would have scattered like the dreams of fever, seem to reign supreme in large sections of the religious world. And this calamity has overtaken us in the presence of the vast, perhaps disproportionate, advance of scientific knowledge, which feels most keenly and presses most

heavily the weaknesses of a credulous or ceremonial form of belief. It is, no doubt, conceivable that these dreadful forms and 'fiery 'faces' might portend for England the same overthrow of faith that has overtaken other countries. If such a separation were indeed universally impending between the religion of the coming age and the progress of knowledge, between the permanent interests of the Christian Churches and the interests of the European States, then there would be a cause for alarm more serious than any of the commonplace topics suggested by the panics of religious journals or the assaults of enraged critics. The fates would then indeed have declared against us—

> Non me tua fervida terrent
> Dicta, ferox; sed Di terrent et Jupiter hostis.

But let us hope better things. Behind these outward manifestations of danger, there is a higher Christianity, which neither assailants nor defenders have fully exhausted. We cannot believe that the inexorable hour has struck.

There is good ground for hoping that the difficulties of religion, national religion, Christian religion, are but the results of passing maladies, either in its professed friends or supposed foes. We may fairly say, with the first Napoleon—'We have perhaps gone a little too fast; but 'we have reason on our side, and when one 'has reason on one's side, one should have the 'courage to run some risks.' The Evening star, according to the fine image of the poet, which is the accompaniment of the setting day, may be one and the same with the Morning star, the harbinger of sunrise.

It is a large inquiry. I can but touch on a few salient points.

Progressive element in Religion.

I. First, there is the essentially progressive element in religion itself. Lord Macaulay, in his celebrated essay on Ranke's 'History of 'the Popes,' maintains, with all the exuberance of logic and rhetoric, the difference between theology and all other sciences is in this respect, that what it was in the days of the patriarch Job, such it must be in the nineteenth

century, and to the end of time. No doubt in religion, as in all great subjects of human thought, there is a permanent and unchanging element; but in everything which relates to its form, in much which relates to its substance, the paradox of our great historian is as contrary to fact as it would be crushing to our aspirations if it were true. In the practice of theological controversy, it has been too much the custom to make the most of differences and the least of agreements. But in the theological study of the past, it has been too much the custom to see only the agreements and not the differences. Look in the face the fact that the belief of each successive epoch of Christendom has varied enormously from the belief of its predecessors. The variations of the Catholic Church, both past and present, have been almost, if not quite, as deep and wide as the variations of Protestantism; and these variations, whilst they show that each form of theology is but an approximation to the truth, and not the

whole truth itself, contain the surest indication of vitality in the whole body of religious faith. The conceptions of the relations of man to man, and, still more, of man to God, have been incontestably altered with the growth of centuries. Not to speak of the total extinction of ancient polytheism, and confining ourselves within the limits of the Christian Church, it is one of the most consolatory fruits of theological study to observe the disappearance of whole continents of useless controversies which once distracted the world. What has become of the belief, once absolutely universal in Christendom, that, unless by some altogether exceptional intervention, no human being could be saved who had not passed through the waters of baptism ; that even innocent children, if not immersed in the font, were doomed to endless perdition ? Or where are the interminable questions respecting the doctrine of predestination or the mode of justification which occupied the middle of the sixteenth century in Protestant Churches ? Into what limbo has passed the

terrible conflict between the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers amongst the now United Presbyterians? What do we now hear of the doctrine of the Double Procession, or of the Light on Mount Tabor, which in the ninth century and in the fifteenth filled the mind of Eastern Christendom? These questions for the time occupied, in these several Churches, the whole horizon of theological thought. They are dead and buried; and for us, standing on their graves, it is idle to say that theology has not changed. It has changed. Religion has survived those changes; and this is the historical pledge that it may, that it will, survive a thousand more.

Even the mere removal of what may be called dead matter out of the path of living progress is of itself a positive gain. But the signs of the capability of future improvement in Religion are more direct than this. No doubt theologians have themselves to thank for the rigid, immutable character which has been ascribed by philosophers to their beliefs. The Jesuit maxim, *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint,*

has been too often accepted in all Churches for any of the Churches to complain if they have been taken at their word. But already, as far back as the Reformation, there were indications of a deeper insight—exceptional and quaint, but so expressive as to vindicate for Christianity, even then, the widest range which future discoveries may open before it. In the first Confession of John Knox, the Reformers had perceived what had been so long concealed from the eyes of the Schoolmen and the Fathers—that the most positive expressions, even of their own convictions, were not guaranteed from imperfection or mutability; and the entreaty with which that Confession is prefaced, contains at once a fine example of true Christian humility and the stimulus to the noblest Christian ambition—'We conjure you 'if any man will note in this our Confession any 'article or sentence repugnant to God's Holy 'Word, that it would please him of his gentle- 'ness, and for Christian charity's sake, to ad- 'monish us of the same in writing; and we,

'upon our honour and fidelity, do promise him 'satisfaction from the Holy Scriptures, or due 'reformation of that which he shall prove to be 'amiss.' And perhaps even more striking is the like expression in the well-known address of the first pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, before embarking on the great enterprise which was to issue in the foundation of new churches and new commonwealths beyond the Atlantic —'I am verily persuaded that the Lord has 'more truth yet to come for us—yet to break 'forth out of His Holy Word. The Lutherans 'cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther 'saw. The Calvinists stick fast where they 'were left by that great man of God, who yet 'saw not all things. Though they were burning 'and shining lights, yet they penetrated not 'into the whole counsel of God, but were as 'willing to embrace further light as that which 'they first received. I beseech you to remember 'that it is an article of your Church's covenant, 'that you be ready to receive whatever truth 'shall be made known to you from the written

'Word of God.' 'Noble words,' says the eloquent historian[1] of the Dutch Republic; 'words to bear fruit, after centuries shall go 'by.' They are, indeed, the charter of the future glories of Protestant, and perhaps of Roman Christianity. Well did Archbishop Whately, on the eve of a change in the constitution of the Church of England, exclaim:— 'I will not believe that the Reformers locked 'the door, and threw away the key for ever.' It is in the light of this progressive historical development that the confessions and liturgies, the doctrines and usages, of former times find their proper place. All of them, taken as the final expressions of absolute truth, are misleading. All of them, even the most imperfect, may be taken as the various phases and steps of a Church and a faith whose glory it is to be perpetually advancing towards perfection.

II. When we examine in detail the materials of Christian theology, they give abundant

[1] Motley, *Life of Barneveldt*, ii. 295.

Analysis of the original documents.

confirmation of this general truth. Theology has gained, and may gain immensely, by the process which has produced so vast a change in all other branches of knowledge—the process of diving below the surface and discovering the original foundations. How much has been effected for archæology by the excavations of Pompeii, of Nineveh, of Rome, of Troy, of Mycenæ! How much for history, by the exploration of the archives of Simancas, of the Register House of Edinburgh! How much for science, by the crucible of chemistry, by the spade and hatchet of the geologist, by the plummet of the *Challenger*! To this general law theology furnishes no exception. Every deep religious system has in it more than appeared at the time to its votaries, far more than has appeared in later times to its adversaries. Even in the ancient religions of Greece and Rome, it is surprising to observe how vast a power of expansion and edification was latent in forms of which the influence might long ago seem to have died out. The glory of the Homeric

poems, the solemnity of Sophocles and Æschylus, the beauty of the Apollo Belvidere, have, as it were, risen from their graves after the lapse of centuries, and occupy a larger space in the modern mind than they have done at any time since their first creation. Even in the case of Mohammedanism the Koran has, within the last century, been awakened from a slumber of ages, and has been discovered to contain maxims which Christendom might cultivate with advantage, but which, in all the long centuries of ignorance, were hopelessly forgotten both by friends and foes. A great religion is not dead because it is not immediately comprehended, or because it is subsequently perverted, if only its primitive elements contain, along with the seeds of decay and transformation, the seeds of living truth. Especially is this the case in Christianity, which is not only (like Mohammedanism) the religion of a sacred book, but the religion of a sacred literature and a sacred life.

Putting aside for the moment all question

of the divine authority of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and of the dogmatic systems built upon them, it is certain that their original force and grace is far more keenly appreciated now than it was when they were overlaid with fanciful allegories and scholastic perversions. The spirit of the time, the 'Zeit-'Geist,' as Matthew Arnold says, 'has turned the 'rays of his lantern' full upon them, and in 'the 'fierce light' that now beats upon their structure, if some parts have faded away, if the relation of the several parts to each other has been greatly altered, yet there can be no question that by its influence, which has penetrated more or less through all modern theology, the meaning, and, with the meaning, the grandeur and the beauty, of the Sacred Volume has been brought out with a fulness which was unknown to Hume and Voltaire, because it had been equally unknown to Augustine and Aquinas. Whole systems of false doctrine or false practice, whole fabrics of barbarous phraseology, have received their death-blow as the Ithuriel of modern

criticism has transfixed with his spear here a spurious text, there an untenable interpretation, here a wrong translation, there a mistaken punctuation.

Or again, with regard to our increased knowledge of the dates and authorship of particular books, much, no doubt, remains obscure; but this partial ignorance is as the fulness of knowledge compared with the total blank which prevailed in the Church for a thousand years or more. All the instruction, inward and outward, which we have acquired from our discovery of the successive dates, and therewith of the successive phases, of St. Paul's Epistles, was lost almost until the beginning of this century, but has now become the starting-point of fresh inquiry and fresh delight in every historical or theological treatise. The disentanglement of the various authorship of the Psalter, the Pentateuch, and the Book of Isaiah from the artificial monotony in which, regardless of times and circumstances, a blind tradition had involved them, gives a significance to the several portions of

the respective books which no one who has once grasped it will ever willingly abandon. The Parables, as has been of late well described, have by their very nature an immortality of application which could never have been perceived had they been always, as they were in many instances at the time of their first delivery, shut up within the gross, carnal, matter-of-fact interpretation of those who said, 'How can this man 'give us his flesh to eat?' or 'It is because we 'have taken no bread.' In short, when it was perceived, in the noble language of Burke,[1] that the Bible was not a dead code, or collection of rigid dogmas, but 'an infinite variety of a most 'venerable and most multifarious literature,' from that moment it became as impossible in the nature of things that the educated portion of mankind should ever cease to take an interest in the Old and New Testament, as it would be that they should cease to take an interest in Homer, or Shakspeare, or Dante, or Scott. The Sacred Books, which were once regarded as the

[1] Burke's Works, x. 21, Speech on Acts of Uniformity.

stars were regarded by ancient astronomers, spangles set in the sky, or floating masses of nebulous light, or a galaxy of milky spots, have now been resolved by the telescope of scholarship into their component parts. Lord Macaulay would not have denied that astronomy has undergone a total revolution through Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton—a revolution which has immensely extended its grandeur and its usefulness. Erasmus, Lowth, Herder, and Ewald have effected for Biblical knowledge a revolution no less complete and no less beneficent. There has been, as it were, a triple chain of singular, one may almost say, providential, coincidences. The same critical investigation which has opened our eyes to the beauty and the wisdom of the sacred records has, by revealing to us the large infusion of the poetic element, enabled us to distinguish between the temporary and the essential, between the parabolical and the historical: and thus, at the moment when science and ethnology are pointing out difficulties, which on a literal and

mechanical view of the Biblical records are insuperable, a door of escape has been opened by the disclosure of a higher aspect of the Scriptures, which would be equally true and valuable were there no scientific difficulty in existence. Except in the lowest and most barbarous classes of society the invectives and the scoffs of the last century have ceased. They have been extinguished, not by the fires of the Inquisition or the anathemas of Convocations or General Assemblies, but by the steady growth of the same reverential, rational appreciation of the successive stages in the revelation of great truths, as has shut the mouths of the defamers of Milton and covered with shame the despisers of Shakespeare.

III. Leaving the grounds of hope furnished to us by the original documents of our faith, let us turn to those which are supplied from the study of its doctrines and institutions. And here I will name two bridges, as it were, by which the passage to a brighter prospect may be effected. One is the increasing consciousness

of the importance of definition. It was said by a well-known Oxford theologian of the last generation that 'without definition controversy is either hopeless or useless.' He has not, in his subsequent career, applied this maxim, as we might fairly have expected from his subtle intellect, to the clearing away of obstructions and frivolities. But the maxim is true, not only in the negative sense in which he pronounced it, but in the more important sense of the pacifying and enlightening tendency necessarily implied in all attempts to arrive at the clear meaning of the words employed. It was a sagacious remark which I heard not long ago, from a Scottish minister on the shores of Argyleshire, that the vehemence of theological controversy has been chiefly in proportion to the emptiness of the phrases used. So long as an expression is employed merely as a party watchword, without inquiring what it means, it acts like a magical spell: it excites a senseless enthusiasm; it spreads like an infectious malady; it terrifies the weak; it acts as a stimulant to the vacant

Increased sense of the importance of definition.

brain. But the moment that we attempt to trace its origin, to discover in what other words it can be expressed, the enthusiasm cools, the panic subsides, the contagion ceases to be catching, the dram ceases to intoxicate, the cloud disperses, and the clear sky appears. This pregnant reflection might be aptly illustrated by examples in the history of the Scottish churches. But I will confine myself to two instances drawn from other countries. One is that of which I have before spoken, the doctrine of the Double Procession, which was sufficient to tear asunder the Eastern and Western Churches; to give the chief practical occasion for the terrible anathemas of the Athanasian Creed; to precipitate the fall of the Empire of Constantinople; and therefore to sow the original seed of the present formidable Eastern Question. This controversy has in later days, with very few exceptions, fallen into entire obscurity. But in those cases where it has occupied the attention of modern theologians, its sting has been taken out by the process, simple

as it would seem, but to which resort had never been had before, of inducing the combatants to express their conflicting opinions by other phrases than those which had been the basis of the original antagonism. This, and this only, is the permanent interest which attached to a recent Conference at Bonn, between certain theologians of the Greek, Latin, and English churches. What was then done with much satisfaction, at least to those who were immediately concerned, might be applied with still more advantage to many other like phrases which have acted as mischievous a part in the disintegration and disunion of Christendom. Another instance shall be given from a church nearer home. In the Gorham controversy, which in 1850 threatened to rend the Church of England from its summit to its base, and which produced the widest theological panic of any within our time, the whole question hinged on the word 'regeneration;' and yet, as Bishop Thirlwall showed in one of those Charges which I would recommend to all theological students,

of whatever church, who wish to see the value of severe discrimination and judicial serenity on the successive controversies of our time, it never occurred to the disputants that there was an ambiguity in the word itself—it never occurred to them to define or explain what either of them intended to express by it.[1] What is there said with withering irony concerning the word 'regeneration' is true of the larger number of theological phrases by which truth has been veiled and charity stifled. Differences and difficulties will remain. But the clamour, the turmoil, the fierceness of the fight is concerning words, is what the Apostle denounced as 'a battle of words.'[2] Explain these—define these—the party collapses, the bitterness exhales, the fear is cast out.

Another ground of hope is the growing sense of the doctrine of proportion. It is a doctrine which has dawned slowly and painfully on the theological mind of Christendom.

[1] Bishop Thirlwall's *Charges*, i. 156.
[2] 1 Tim. vi. 4.

'In God's matters,' said Samuel Rutherford, 'there is not, as in grammar, the positive and 'comparative degrees; there is not a true, a 'more true, and a most true.' 'Every pin of the 'tabernacle,' said Ebenezer Erskine, in his amazement at the indifference which Whitfield displayed towards the Solemn League and Covenant, 'is precious.'[1] What Rutherford and Erskine thus tersely and quaintly expressed is but the assumption on which has rested the vast basis of the Rabbinical theology of Judaism, and the Scholastic Theology, whether of Catholic or Protestant Churches. But to the better spirits of Christendom there has now penetrated the conviction that these maxims are not only not sound, but are unsound to the very core. 'There *is* a true, a more true, and a most true.' 'Every pin of the tabernacle is *not* equally 'precious.' Richard Hooker and Richard Baxter had already begun to perceive that religion was no exception to the truth, expressed by a yet greater genius than either, in the magni-

Increased sense of the doctrine of Proportion.

[1] *Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, p. 78.

ficent lines of 'Troilus and Cressida,' which tells us how essential it is in all things to

> Observe degree, priority, and place,
> Insistence, course, proportion, season, form,
> Office, and custom, in all line of order.

This, if not the ultimate, at any rate is the proximate solution of some of the difficulties which have threatened, or which still threaten, the peace of Churches and the growth of Religion.

Question of Church government.

Take the vexed question of Church government. The main source of the gall which once poisoned, and still in some measure poisons, the relations between Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches, was not the position that one or other form was to be found in the Bible or in antiquity, or was more conformable to common-sense and order. These are comparatively innocent and unexciting propositions. The distracting thought lay in the conviction that one or other was absolutely perfect, and was alone essential to the Christian religion. It is for the rectification of this misplaced exclusiveness that

we owe a deep debt of gratitude to such men as Hooker in England, and Leighton in Scotland. There is much to be said for Presbyterianism; there is much to be said for Episcopacy. But there is much more to be said for the secondary, temporary, accidental character of both, when compared with the general principles to which they each minister; and in the light of these principles we shall view more justly and calmly the real merits and demerits both of bishops and of presbyters, than is possible for those who, like your Scottish or my English ancestors, upheld the constitution of either Church as in all times and under all circumstances irrevocably indispensable. What is true with regard to those two leading distinctions is still more applicable to all debates on Patronage, Ecclesiastical Courts, Vestments, Postures. There is a difference, there is, if we choose so to express it, a right and a wrong, in each case. The appointment by a multitude may be preferable to the appointment by a single individual; the appointment by a responsible layman may be

preferable to the appointment by a synod; a black gown may, in certain circumstances, be superior to a white one, or a white one to a red one. But far more important than any of these positions is the persuasion that, at most, all of these things, the nomination, the jurisdiction, the dress, the attitude of ministers, are but means towards an end—very distant means towards a very distant end. And in measure as we appreciate this due subordination, scandals will diminish, and the Church of the future will leap forward on its course, bounding like a ship that has thrown over its super-charge of cargo, or quelled an intestine mutiny.

Question of the evidence of miracles.

Or take a yet graver question—the mode of regarding those physical wonders which are called miracles. There is no doubt an increasing difficulty on this subject—a difficulty enhanced by the incredulity which now besets the educated sections of mankind, and by the credulity which has taken hold with a fresh tenacity on the half-educated. It is a question on which neither science nor religion, I venture to think,

has yet spoken the last word. It is a complex problem, imperatively demanding that careful definition of which I spoke before, and the calm survey of the extraordinary incidents not only of Biblical but of ecclesiastical history, whether Catholic or Protestant. On the true aspects of such physical portents as have been connected with the history of religion, there is much to be argued. But on these arguments I do not enter. The point on which I would desire to fix your attention is this: that whatever view we take of these 'signs and wonders,' their relative proportion as grounds of evidence has altogether changed. There is a well known saying, like other proverbial maxims [1] of Christian life, erroneously ascribed to St. Augustine—'We 'believe the miracles for the sake of the Gospels,

[1] It fell to my lot two years ago to track out the story of another famous axiom, which was really due to Rupertus Meldenius, an obscure German divine of the 17th century, but in like manner, falsely ascribed to Augustine; 'In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.' See 'Address on Richard Baxter,' in *Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1876. The saying concerning miracles is sometimes quoted as Augustine's, but on inquiry I find that there is no ground for ascribing it to him. The nearest approach to it is the passage from

'not the Gospels for the sake of the miracles.' Fill your minds with this principle, view it in all its consequences, observe how many maxims both of the Bible and of philosophy conform to it, and you will find yourselves in a position which will enable you to treat with equanimity half the perplexities of this subject. However valuable the record of extraordinary manifestations may be in other respects, however impressively they may be used to convey the truths of which they are confessedly but the

the treatise *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, c. 19, to which Archbishop Trench refers in his work on the Miracles. 'Quaecumque talia [*i.e.* the Donatist Miracles] in Catholicâ [Ecclesiâ] fiunt, ideo sunt approbata, quia in Catholicâ fiunt; non ideo manifestatur Catholica, quia hæc in eâ fiunt.' This, however, is a very inadequate statement of the principle, if indeed it be not merely the polemical and untenable assertion that miracles are vitiated by heresy—the exact opposite of our Lord's words, Mark ix. 38.

The substance of the sentiment, however, has been repeatedly expressed by writers, who, if less famous than Augustine, have penetrated far more profoundly into the root of the question. Not to mention Coleridge, Arnold, and Milman, it may suffice to quote from the work of Archbishop Trench to which reference has just been made. '"Miracles," says Fuller, "are the swaddling clothes of the infant Church;" and, we may add, not the garments of the full-grown.' (Trench *on the Miracles*, 51.) '*It may be more truly said, that we believe the miracles for Christ's sake, than Christ for the miracles' sake.*' (*Ibid.* 103.)

symbols, they have, in the eyes of the very men whom we most desire to convince, become stumbling-blocks and not supports. External evidence has with most reflecting minds receded to the background, internal evidence has come to the front. Let us learn by experience to use with moderation arguments which, at least for the present, have lost their force. Let us acknowledge that there are greater miracles, more convincing miracles, than those which appeal only to our sense of astonishment. 'The 'greatest of miracles,' as a venerable statesman has observed, is the character of Christ. The world was converted, in the first instance, not by appeals to physical, but to moral prodigies. Let us recognise that the preternatural is not the supernatural, and that, whether the preternatural is present or absent, the true supernatural may and will remain unshaken.

The moral elements of Christianity.

IV. And what is the true supernatural? What are those essentials in religion which have been the purifying salt of Christianity hitherto, and will be its illuminating light hereafter;

which, raising us above our natural state, point to a destiny above this material world, this commonplace existence? The great advance which, on the whole, theology has made in these latter centuries, and which it may be expected still more to make in the coming centuries is this, that the essentially supernatural elements of religion are recognised to be those which are moral and spiritual. These are its chief recommendations to the reason of mankind. Without them, it would have long ago perished. So far as it has lost sight of these, it has dwindled and faded. With these, it may overcome the world. Other[1] opportunities will occur in which I shall hope to draw out at length both the means by which these spiritual elements of Christianity may be carried on from generation to generation, and also the characteristics which distinguish them from like elements in inferior religions. It is enough to have indicated that in the supremacy of these,

[1] In the two sermons preached in the College Church and in the Parish Church of St. Andrew's on the following Sunday, March 18.

and in their supremacy alone, lies the hope of the future. To love whatever is truly loveable, to detest whatever is truly detestable, to believe that the glory and divinity of goodness is indestructible, and that there has been, is, and will be a constant enlargement and elevation of our conceptions of it—this is a basis of Religion, a starting-point which enables us, not only to preserve the best parts of the sacred records and of Christian worship and practice, but to secure a guarantee at once for the perpetuity and for the growth of Religion itself.

Observe also that in proportion to our insistence on the moral greatness of Christianity as its chief evidence and chief essence, there accrues an external weight of authority denied to the lower and narrower, but granted to the higher and wider, views of religion. When we look over the long annals of ecclesiastical history, we shall often find that it is not within the close range of the so-called orthodox, but from the outlying camp of the so-called heretic or infidel,

that the champions of the true faith have come. Not from the logic of Calvin, or the rhetoric of Bossuet, but from the great scholars and philosophers at the close of the last century and the beginning of this, have been drawn the best portraitures of Christianity and its Founder. A clearer glimpse into the nature of the Deity was granted to Spinoza,[1] the excommunicated Jew of Amsterdam, than to the combined forces of Episcopacy and Presbytery in the Synod of Dordrecht. When we cast our eyes over the volumes which, perhaps, of all others, give us at once the brightest prospect of the progress of humanity, and the saddest retrospect of the mistakes of theology—Mr. Lecky's Histories of

[1] This statement would be justified by a comparison of the best sayings of Spinoza with the best sayings of the Synod of Dort. The former are still read with admiration and instruction, even by those who widely differ from Spinoza's general teaching. The latter are but little known, even to those who most firmly agree with the theories propounded by the Synod.

It may also be well to record, over against the anathemas which have been levelled at his name, the epithet by which his humbler acquaintances called him immediately after his death, 'The blessed Spinoza,' and the description given of him by Schleiermacher, 'He was a man full of religion and of the Holy Ghost.'

'European Morals' and of 'Rationalism'—when we read there of the eradication of deeply rooted beliefs which, under the guidance of ecclesiastics and ecclesiastical rulers, were supposed to be essential to the existence of religion—witchcraft, persecution, intolerance, prohibition of commercial intercourse—if for one moment our faith is staggered by seeing that these beneficent changes were brought about by States in defiance of Churches, by philosophers in defiance of divines, it is revived when we perceive that the end towards which those various agencies worked is the same as that desired by the best men in all the departments of human life; that what Mr. Lecky calls 'the secularisation of 'politics' is in fact the Christianisation of theology. That view of man, of the universe, and of God which by a recent able writer is called 'Natural Religion'[1] is in fact Christianity in its larger and wider aspect. The hope of immortality, which beyond any other belief of

[1] See a series of most instructive articles in *Macmillan's Magazine*, on 'Natural Religion,' between February, 1875, and April, 1877.

man carries us out of the world of sense, was eagerly defended by Voltaire and Rousseau, no less than by Butler and Paley. The serious view of duty, the admiration of the heroic and the generous and the just, the belief in the transcendent value of the spiritual and the unseen, are cherished possessions of the philosophers of our generation, no less than of the missionaries and saints of the generation that is past. The Goliath of the nineteenth century, as was once well observed by a Professor[1] of your own, is not on the opposite side of the valley; he is in our midst; he is on our side: he is not to be slain by sling and stone, but he is—if we did but know it—our friend, our ally, our champion. If there is a constantly increasing tendency, as Mr. Lecky says,[2] 'to identify the Bible and conscience,' this is in other words, as he himself well states the case, a tendency to place Christianity in a position 'in which we 'have the strongest evidence of the triumph of

[1] Professor Campbell.

[2] *History of Rationalism*, i. 384, ii. 247, 385.

'the conceptions of its Founder,' a position in which by the nature of the case the doubters will be constantly diminishing and the intelligent believers constantly increasing.

It is indeed a hope not only for the solution, but for the pacific solution of our theological problems, that in this, more than in any previous age, in our country more than in most countries, the critical and the conservative elements overlap, intertwine, and shade off into each other—'Ionians and Dorians on both sides.' The intelligent High Churchman, the moderate Free Churchman, melts almost imperceptibly into the inquiring scholar. The generous Puritan or Nonconformist is more than one-third a Latitudinarian, perhaps even half a Churchman. Few philosophers have so entirely parted with the natural feelings of the human heart, or the natural aspirations of the human mind, as to be indifferent to the sane or insane direction of so mighty an instrument for good or evil as the religious instinct of mankind. And thus the basis of a reasonable theology, even if shaken

for the moment by the frenzy of partisans, has intrinsically become wider and more solid. The lines drawn by sects and parties do not correspond with the deeper lines of human nature and of history. In 'a chart of religious 'thought,' drawn out not long since by a distinguished theological statesman, there was amongst the various schools enumerated, one which was only noticed to be immediately dismissed. Yet this tendency of constant inquiry, of indifference to the forms compared with the substance of religion, is the very one which, happily running across all the others, contains within itself the backbone of Christian life, the lamp of Christian thought. We often hear of the reconciliation of theology and science. The phrase is well intended, and has been used as the title of an excellent book. But it does not exactly describe the case. What we need is the recognition that so far as they meet, Theology and Science are one and indivisible. Whatever enlarges our ideas of nature enlarges our ideas of God. What-

ever gives us a deeper insight into the nature of the Author of the universe gives us a deeper insight into the secrets of the universe itself. Whatever is bad theology is also bad science; whatever is good science is also good theology. In like manner, we hear of the reconciliation of religion and morality. The answer is the same; they are one and indivisible. Whatever tends to elevate the intelligence, the purity, the generosity of mankind, is high religion; whatever debases the mind, or corrupts the heart, or hardens the conscience, under whatever pretext, however specious, is low religion, is infidelity of the worst sort. There are, according to the old Greek proverb, many who have borne the thyrsus, and yet not been inspired prophets. There are many also who have been inspired prophets without wearing the prophetic mantle, or bearing the mystic wand; and these, whether statesmen, philosophers, poets, have been amongst the friends, conscious or unconscious, of the religion of the future; they are citizens, whether registered or

unregistered, in the Jerusalem which is above, and which is free.

Hopes of the Church of Scotland.

V. And now, with all this cloud of witnesses, what is our duty in this interval of waiting, of transition? What is our duty? and what is yours, O students of St. Andrew's, O future pastors of the famous Church of Scotland, O rising generation of that strong Scottish nation which in former times was the firmest bulwark of a national, Protestant, reasonable Christianity? You, no doubt, in this secluded corner of our island, feel the breath of the spirit of the age. How are you to avoid being carried about with every gust of its fitful doctrine? How are you to gather into your sails the bounding breeze of its invincible strength? There is nothing to make you despair of your Church. It may have to pass through many transformations; but a Church which has not only stood the rude shocks of so many secessions and disruptions, but continues to gather into its ranks the most liberal tendencies of the nation, is too great an institution to be sacri-

ficed to the exigencies of party, if only it be true to that fine maxim of Archbishop Leighton's, of leaving to others 'to preach up the times,' and claiming for itself 'to preach up eternity.' The principle of a national Establishment, which Chalmers vindicated in the interests of Christian philanthropy, has in these latter days more and more commended itself in the interests of Christian liberty. The enlarging, elevating influence infused into a religious institution by its contact, however slight, with so magnificent an ordinance as the British commonwealth; the value of resting a religious union not on some special doctrine or institution, but on the highest welfare of the whole community;—these principles are not less, but more appreciated now than they were in a less civilised age. It is the growing conviction of all thoughtful men that there is no ground in the nature of things or in the precepts of the Christian religion for the sharp division which divines used to draw between the spiritual and the secular, for the curious fancy which represented

all which belonged to ecclesiastical matters as holy, all which belonged to the state as worldly. In proportion as those larger and loftier hopes of religion, of which I have been speaking, penetrate into all the communions of this country, the provincial and retrograde distinctions which have been stereotyped amongst us will fade away; and the policy of wisely and boldly improving our institutions, instead of blindly destroying or blindly preserving them, will regain the hold which as late as the first half of this century it retained on the intelligence and conscience of the nation.

There is perhaps a danger which threatens the Church of Scotland, in common with all the Churches of Christendom—the apprehension which we sometimes hear expressed, that the more gifted and cultivated minds of the coming generation shrink from the noble mission, because of the supposed restraints of the clerical profession. Far more dismal than any secession of Old Lights or New Lights would be the secession of the vigorous intellects and

nobler natures which of old time made the Scottish Church, though poor in wealth, rich in the best gifts of God. But it is precisely this tendency which it is in your own power to cure or to prevent. The attractions of the Christian ministry, the opportunities which it offers of untried usefulness, are not less but greater, in proportion as the questions of religion involve a larger and deeper sweep of ideas than when they ran within the four corners of the Confession of Faith. Nor is there any reason in the constitution of your Church, or in the prospects of your country, why that Confession should be an obstacle to the expanding forms of religious life amongst you. I am not here to criticise or disparage a venerable document, which, born under my own roof at Westminster, alone of all such confessions for a short time represented the whole national faith of Great Britain. If it has some defects or exaggerations, from which the English Thirty-nine Articles are free, on the other hand it has soared to higher heights and

struck down to deeper depths. Each views theology from a limited experience and through the colour of the atmosphere, political, philosophical and military, in which the framers of each were moving. To compare the failings and the excellences of the two Confessions, and to illustrate from them the condition of our respective Churches, would be, if this were the time or place, a highly interesting and instructive task. Still even the Confession of the Westminster Assembly is not the essential, is not the best characteristic of the Church of Scotland, any more than the Thirty-nine Articles are the essential or the best characteristic of the Church of England. Nor are the present forms of adhesion to it more sacred than the ancient forms of adhesion to the English standards, which a few years ago, by the timely intervention of the Imperial Legislature, were largely modified,[1] and might at any moment, without any loss to the Church or the State, be altogether abolished.

[1] See *Essays on Church and State*, 212.

These, however, are merely passing and external difficulties, to be surmounted by patriotic policy, by mutual forbearance, by courageous perseverance. And neither for us nor for you are any such restrictions worth a single gifted intellect or a single devout life that they may exclude. But neither in the retention nor in the abolition of these local impediments is the main interest of the ministry of the Church of Scotland in the times that are coming. Confession or no Confession, subscription or no subscription, Established Church or Free or United Presbyterian, there is other and worthier work for you to accomplish. There are, on the one hand, the moral evils which you have to combat, the rough manners, the intemperate habits of large numbers of your fellow-citizens. There are, on the other hand, the high and pure traditions of former times which you have to maintain; the appropriation of whatever pastoral activity or keen intellectual ardour may be seen in other communions. There are those words and works

of greatness to which I referred in my earlier address, and the actual examples which you have or have had before you in your own generation. In these there is more than enough to occupy and exalt yourselves and others, and to show that the Church of Scotland is still able, and is still proud, to hold its head among the Churches of Christendom. It is for you to welcome with a just pride its acknowledged glories. Place before yourselves the noble thoughts which have been enkindled, not by Germans, not by Anglicans, but by your own pastors and teachers. Remember how one[1] has taught you, in language never surpassed, the connection of religion with common life, and the claims of the one universal religion to acceptance by the very reason of its universality; how another[2] has shown you the high value of theology, viewed in its long historical aspect, and the yet higher grandeur of religion; how[3] another has taught

[1] Principal Caird. [2] Principal Tulloch.

[3] *Salvation Here and Hereafter*, by the Rev. John Service, Minister of Inch.

you that, however great is the Church militant or the Church dogmatic, there is yet a greater Church, the Church beneficent; how one[1] has endeavoured to represent to you the relation of religion to culture, another[2] of religion to philosophy, and[3] another of religion to ritual; how the still small whispers of spiritual life, though no longer[4] heard from the farther shore of the Tay or of the Clyde, still make themselves felt by those whose ears are attuned to their heavenly harmonies; how many an eloquent voice is yet heard from the pulpit of ancient abbey or populous city or mountain village; how inspiring is the example[5] of the venerable teacher whom the Church of Scotland sent out to India some forty years ago, and who still bears the greatest name of living Indian missionaries; how invigorating and stimulating

[1] Principal Shairp.

[2] Professor Knight.

[3] *Pastoral Counsels*, by the late Rev. John Robertson; *Reforms in the Church of Scotland*, by the late Robert Lee, D.D.

[4] The late John McLeod Campbell, and the late Thomas Erskine.

[5] Rev. Alexander Duff, D.D.

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is the memory of the foremost Scottish minister of our age,[1] who, though gone, yet still seems to live again amongst us in his own flesh and blood, and whose commanding voice still exhorts us, as with his dying words, to be 'broad 'with the breadth of the charity of Almighty 'God, and narrow with the narrowness of His 'righteousness.' I might enlarge the roll—I might go back to the worthies of earlier days—to Carstairs,[2] whose memory was recalled of late by a descendant worthy of himself—to the great literary leaders of the Church in the last century—to Chalmers and Irving. In our own time, I might speak of your most famous living countryman, who, though winding up the threads of his long and honourable life at Chelsea, has never disdained the traditions of the Scottish Church and nation, still warms at the recollection of his native Annandale, still is fired with poetic ardour when he speaks of the glories of St. Andrew's.

[1] *Life of Norman McLeod*, by the Rev. Donald McLeod.
[2] *Life of Carstairs*, by the Rev. Dr. Story.

But it is enough. There are words which often come into my mind when I look at an assemblage like this—words spoken by a gifted poet, endeared to some among us, and who loved your country well—a cry, desponding perhaps, yet also cheering, wrung from him by the dislocations and confusions of his time, which is also ours, when he looked out on the contending forces of the age—

O that the armies indeed were arrayed! O joy of the onset!
Sound, thou trumpet of God; come forth, great cause, to array us;
King and Leader appear; thy soldiers sorrowing seek thee.[1]

We may already hear the distant notes of that trumpet; we may catch, however faintly, the coming of that cause. The kings and leaders surely will appear at last, if their soldiers will but follow them on to victory.

It was once said in mournful complaint of the highest ecclesiastic in Christendom, 'For the 'sake of gaining to-day, he has thrown away to-

[1] Clough's *Bothie*, ix.

'morrow for ever.' Be our policy the reverse of this: be it ours to fasten our thoughts, not on the passions and parties of the brief to-day, but on the hopes of the long to-morrow. The day, the year, may perchance belong to the destructives, the cynics, and the partisans. But the morrow, the coming century, belongs to the catholic, comprehensive, discriminating, all-embracing Christianity, which has the promise, not perhaps of this present time, but of the times which are yet to be.

> O fortes, pejoraque passi
> Mecum sæpe viri—
> Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.
>
> Come, my friends—
> Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me . . . .
> 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.[1]

[1] Tennyson's *Ulysses.*

SERMON

PREACHED AT ST ANDREW'S

IN THE CHAPEL OF THE UNITED COLLEGE OF ST SALVADOR AND ST LEONARD

ON MARCH 18, 1877

2 KINGS ii. 13.

He took up the mantle of Elijah.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 2.

And the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

SUCCESSION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

HOW can we carry on to the future the electric spark of moral, intellectual, and spiritual life, which is the essence of true religion?—how shall Elisha catch the mantle of Elijah?—what shall be the succession by which the torch of truth and power of goodness will be handed on from generation to generation? This is a question which has received many answers. It is a question which concerns us all. It is a question not unsuited to a place like this, where generation succeeds generation with so much rapidity, and where the atmosphere breathes a perpetual sense of coming and going, of receiving, keeping and handing on in trust to those who shall come after us.

Outward succession.

I. There is first the succession—least important, perhaps, of all, yet not to be altogether

despised—what may be called the outer or mechanical succession, at which, in default of things higher, men have often grasped. There has been, for example, a succession of the relics or the remains of those who have gone before us. Thus it has happened that whole populations sometimes migrated to hang round the shrine of some famous saint, as at Hebron, where a new town was gathered round the tombs of the Jewish Patriarchs, or in England round the supposed sepulchre of St. Alban, or where as in Scotland a whole parish moved to the gallows of Peden, or as in the churchyard of St. Andrew's Cathedral a celebrated Highland preacher—Duncan Mathieson—passed a whole night on the grave of Samuel Rutherford to rekindle his spiritual ardour. The tomb of the good Bishop Kennedy within these walls, the scene of the first Protestant martyrdom in front of this church, ought to give to the building a savour of life and light. We all cling to the graves of our dear departed. We know that the inmost life of those who have gone before us is

not there, yet it is a near approach to what we knew of them on earth—'Even in their ashes 'live their wonted fires.' The bones of Elisha still seem to be instinct with the immortality of the prophet. Then, again, there have been churches in which by these same inanimate remains the ordinations of the teachers and the pastors have been carried on. From Iona the succession of Columba's clergy was believed to have been continued by the transmission of his dead bones. In Armenia the succession of the Patriarchs was and perhaps is still conveyed by the skeleton hand of the first missionary to Armenia. Or, again, sometimes it has been by the clothes of the departed predecessors, as though the figure of Elijah's mantle has been transformed into a prosaic fact. Thus the Jewish Pontificate in the last centuries of its existence was perpetuated by the transference of the official dress from High Priest to High Priest. Or, again, it has been by the touch of the hands of Bishops or Presbyters, as in the Episcopal or Presbyterian Churches

of Protestant Christendom; or by the waving of the hands, as in Roman Christendom; or by the breathing over the heads, as in the Coptic Church. Or again, there have been the edifices in which sacred or venerable institutions have been enshrined, and which have protected the institutions themselves from destruction, and moulded by a kind of external pressure their original shape and tendency. The palaces of the Legislature and the Cathedrals in England, the Colleges in England and Scotland, have each in their several ways at once perpetuated and guided the movements of the political, the religious, the academical life which has run its course within the grooves laid down in the exterior form of the several buildings. All these outer forms have been used to maintain the identity of the spiritual community with the past. But deeply cherished as most of them are, no reflecting person will deceive himself into believing that they are the chief vehicles of moral grace. They are its symbols, they are its witnesses,

they represent to us in external figures the continuity of the Church or of the nation; but they are not the very grace itself. They may all of them exist, and yet the true spiritual unity may be altogether broken. No doubt,

> Even the lifeless stone is dear
> For thought of Him who once lay here.

But He himself has risen, and His presence must be continued in nobler and more enduring channels.

The succession of office.

II. Let us go then a step farther. There is the succession of office. A man succeeds to some post of high responsibility; he succeeds, perhaps, by election or nomination, perhaps by hereditary descent; but the office, however conferred, is itself an assistance towards continuing the moral strength of former times. If we feel ourselves seated in the same place, surrounded by the very circumstances, filled by the very associations, encompassed by the very atmosphere, which inspired our forerunners in earlier days, it is then no mere form or lifeless shape which stirs the mind. It is not

necessary in these cases that the successor should have been named or consecrated by the predecessor, or that the successor should have passed through precisely the same process in arriving at his place, or that the locality in which he exists should be the same. But the sovereign who inherits the throne of forty generations of princes, the prelate who fills the same office that a hundred prelates have occupied before him, the minister who bears on his shoulders the same responsibilities that rested on the shoulders of Walpole, or Pitt, or Canning, or Peel; the teacher who teaches with the same authority as that which has directed the studies of a school or university for centuries, or who succeeds to the traditions of a celebrated College or University, the home and haunt of men famous in Church and State; the descendant of an ancient or illustrious family who knows what a burden of glory or of shame must have fallen upon him —all these give a vitality, a courage, and a wisdom to those who are in the midst of such

influences, and who thus, by the very labours which they have to discharge, may become insensibly transformed into a unity with their high office, fortified by the weight of their duties, elevated by a sense of their vast inheritance. This is a true succession of moral life wherever it bears its proper fruits. The links may sometimes be fragile, but the chain itself is unbroken, and each particular link may take its place as an indissoluble part of the whole. There is a *genius loci*, a spirit of the race and place which hangs about us and which subdues us we know not how. There are trophies of Miltiades in every battlefield of academic or national struggles of which the sight or the remembrance ought for ever to prevent the young Themistocles from sleeping. In this way the truth and the mercy of God are handed on from generation to generation.

Succession of ideas.

III. Yet still even this identity is not complete. The man may fall below his office, the son may be unworthy of his father, the successor may fail to appreciate the predecessor.

From the most venerable institution or locality it may often be that the 'parting genius is 'with sighing sent.' All these associations are mighty steps towards our identification with the good and great of former days, but they do not constitute the identification itself. We come, therefore, to the further and essential question—What is it of which these outward shapes and forms are symbols, what is it of which the high offices and the ancient traditions of State, or Church, or College, are the living frameworks? It is the communication of the like ideas, of the like qualities, of the same graces; it is the fact that the wise and great and good of former times, as Nehemiah prayed for himself, are 'remembered for good' —that is, commemorated, imitated, followed.

Intellectual succession.

Let me first give a few instances of such direct succession in the intellectual world where, perhaps, it can be more clearly, though not more incontrovertibly, traced than in the moral world. Look at the thinkers, the philosophers, the theologians. What was said of the

spiritual connection between the first critical student of the Hebrew Scriptures, Nicholas Lira, and the great Reformer Luther has been exemplified again and again—*Si Lira non cantasset, Lutherus non saltasset.* 'If Lira had not 'played, Luther had not danced.' It was the echo of Augustine that in like manner awakened Calvin; it is the fire of Faraday that still burns in Tyndall. Or, looking at the succession of our poets, how often have they been the intellectual parents of their successors! Before Cowley was twelve years old the great poem of Spenser, 'The Fairy Queen,' he tells us, 'filled his head with such chimes and verses as 'have never ceased ringing there.' The dead, old, nameless author of the ballad of 'Chevy 'Chase' stirred the soul of Sir Philip Sydney, 'as with the sound of a trumpet.' There is a well-known story that when Walter Scott was young, once—and once only—he met Robert Burns. Burns was standing before a picture of a soldier perishing in the winter, and under the picture were written sympathetic lines, which

the gifted poet read aloud with such emotion that the tears rolled down his cheeks; and when he finished he asked, 'Who can tell me 'the author of these lines?' It was an obscure English author, and the only person in the company who knew was a little lame boy, who whispered it to his neighbour. When Burns saw at once the modesty and the intelligence of the child he laid his hand on his head, and, in his quaint, provincial phrase, said, 'You 'will be a man before your mother.'[1] That little lame boy was the greatest genius of the Scottish nation. Who can say how much of his inspiration may have been kindled by that one electrifying contact with the kindred fire of his glorious countryman? Or take another case. Cobbett, the homely but powerful orator, was eleven years old, a poor gardener's lad, when he bought for threepence Swift's 'Tale of a Tub.' On the shady side of a haystack he sat down to read it. 'I

[1] The incident is mentioned in Scott's autobiography (Lockhart's *Life*), but without the precise words used by Burns. These I heard some years ago at Fingask Castle.

'read it,' he says, 'without any thought of 'supper or bed. It produced what I have 'always considered a sort of birth of my in-'tellect.' That was a true affinity of mind with mind. Surely we may each of us call to mind some book which we have read, some lecture which we have heard, which has left upon our minds the indelible impression which opened a door which has never been closed, which gave us a stimulus which we have never lost. Cherish all such remembrances. They are the signs to us that the crumbs of the bread of life have fallen upon us. They are landmarks in our upward journey over the Hill of Difficulty towards the House Beautiful.

Moral succession.

But if this be so with the gifts of intellect, how much more may it be with the far more universal, far more accessible, far more communicable gifts of the moral being. On Shakespeare or on Plato an ordinary man may gaze with awe, yet often not be raised one inch nearer the stupendous genius which he admires. But when we see the moral heroes, the saints, the

martyrs, the generous, the humane, the self-denying, the gentle, and the just, the attraction is more than this. It is almost impossible even to look at them steadily without deriving some strength, some encouragement, some rebuke, some elevation from their very presence. To remember them at all is to remember them for good. It was in good, in being good, and in doing good that their chief energy, their chief existence was spent on earth; and it is therefore in good, in being good, and in doing good that the chief continuance of their presence is carried on still. 'Shall not we follow?' was the exclamation of Augustine as he read an account of the early martyrs. It is almost the inevitable exclamation of every human being whose soul has any spiritual life within it when he thinks of the good or great that by seeing or by report he has ever encountered. It was the mere sight of the apostolic face of John Wesley that awakened in the philanthropic Howard the burning desire to reform the prisons of Europe. It is recorded of an English statesman of the last century,

Lord Shelburne, how deep an impression was made upon him by his visit to the gifted and saintly Frenchman Malesherbes. 'I have seen, he said, 'what I had previously considered could not possibly exist, a man absolutely free from fear and hope alike, yet full of life and warmth. Nothing in the world can disturb his repose. He lacks nothing himself, but he interests himself actively in everything good. I have never been so profoundly struck by anything in the course of my travels; and I feel sure that if ever I accomplish anything great in what remains of my life, I shall do so encouraged by my recollection of Mons. de Malesherbes.' And even without seeing good men or knowing them personally, the mere thinking or reading of them is sufficient to fill the heart. When the missionary Henry Martyn went to India, the study in which he found most profit during his long voyage was the lives of the ancient saints. 'I love,' he says, 'to converse, as it were, with those holy bishops and martyrs with whom, I hope, through grace, to spend a happy eternity. The example

of the Christian saints in the early ages has been a source of sweet reflection to me. No uninspired sentence has affected me so much as that of the historians of those times—that to believe, to suffer, and to love, was the primitive taste.' We may follow such characters perhaps at a great distance, as at a great distance Elisha followed Elijah to the end. Our career or circumstances may be quite different from others, as the career of the quiet, mild, beneficent Elisha was different from the wandering, fierce, heroic Elijah; but still we can follow, still it is possible that the spirit of Elijah may rest upon Elisha. That practice, which was adopted by a good man of the last generation, may be imitated by all of us. Whenever he conferred a benefit on anyone he charged the recipient of his kindness to regard it as a loan, which he was to repay by doing a like kindness to some one else, which is a true keeping and putting out to usury the trust committed to us. That is the true communication of apostolic gifts.

Yet more, the good thoughts, the good

deeds, the good memories of those who have been the salt and the light of the earth do not perish with their departure—they live on still; and those who have wrought them live in them. The weary traveller in the south of Spain, who, after passing many an arid plain and many a bare hill, finds himself at nightfall under the heights of Granada, will hear plashing and rippling under the shade of the spreading trees and along the side of the dusty road the grateful murmur of running waters, of streamlets whose sweet music mingles with his dreams as he sleeps, and meets his ear as the first pleasant voice in the stillness of the early dawn. What is it? It is the sound of the irrigating rivulets called into existence by the Moorish occupants of Granada five centuries ago, which amidst all the changes of race and religion have never ceased to flow. Their empire has fallen, their creed has been suppressed by fire and sword, their nation has been driven from the shores of Spain, and their palaces crumble into ruins; but this trace of their beneficent civilisation still

continues, and in this continuity that which was good and wise and generous in that gifted but unhappy race still lives on to cheer and to refresh their enemies and their conquerors. Even so it is with the good deeds of those who have gone before us. Whatever there has been of grateful consideration, of kindly hospitality, of far-reaching generosity, of gracious charity, of high-minded justice, of unselfish devotion, of saintly devotion, these still feed the stream of moral fertilisation, which will run on when their place knows them no more, when even their names have perished. In a place of education, where the social atmosphere is composed, so to speak, of so many convergent traditions and influences from various quarters, how much, how very much may be effected by the presence of a single strong, pure, high-minded, and energetic character? How surely a young man who knows and does what is right will compel others almost against their will, and almost without his consciousness, to know and to do it also. The persons disappear, but the good tra-

dition remains, their good works do follow them, either their own good words and works which outlive themselves, or those which they have inspired in their successors and survivors. The visions of a noble character, the glimpse of a new kind of virtue does not perish. A thing of goodness, like a thing of beauty, 'is a joy for 'ever.' To admire what is admirable, to adore what is adorable, to follow what is noble, to remember any such examples that have crossed our earthly pilgrimage, that have brightened its darkness and cheered its dulness—this keeps alive before us the ideal of human nature and the essence of the Divine nature. The perpetuation of these graces is the true apostolic succession, is the true identity of the life of man and God, is the true continuity of the Christian Church, is the true communion of saints.

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE TOWN CHURCH OF ST ANDREW'S

ON MARCH 18, 1877

JOB xxviii. 7, 8

There is a path . . . which the vulture's eye hath not seen

The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

THERE are occasions when it is well to look beyond the things which, being seen, are temporal, to the things which, not being seen, are eternal; when, as in the language of the Psalmist, we ask to 'hide ourselves in the tabernacle,' to be 'set upon a rock that is higher than we from the strife of tongues,' or when, as in the words of the Book of Job, we seek for a path which hath not been seen by the keen eye of the vulture of controversy, nor trodden down by the lion's whelp of fierce partisanship.

The spiritual principles of Christianity.

There is a vast and complex structure of doctrines and institutions which have been the product of Christendom, or which have been absorbed into Christendom; there is a vast collection of facts which lie at the root of Christianity, or which have sprung up all along

its course. To examine them in detail, to compare doctrine with doctrine, and institution with institution, and fact with fact, would be a very interesting and instructive task, and would perhaps lead to the same result as that at which we are endeavouring to arrive. But what I now propose is something different. We would endeavour to penetrate, if possible, behind the outward doctrines, ordinances, behind the long history of Christendom, and to ask what are the inward principles which give them permanent value; what are the essential supernatural elements of Christianity which are above the assaults of criticism, above the turmoil of the world, because above the level of our ordinary carnal, earthly nature. If we can arrive, in ever so rough and imperfect a measure, at those fundamental principles, we shall be in a better position to understand what it is that gives a peculiar glory to our common faith.

We will attempt, then, to answer this question as briefly and as plainly as we can. Let us only observe, before entering on the question,

that there are many principles in Christianity which it shares with other religions, and which, therefore, we cannot truly enumerate among its direct results. The Unity of God, for example, which is one of the most important of all religious truths, was known to the Jewish people long before the Christian era. It then assumed a new force and life, but it was from Abraham, or, at least, from Moses, that we first received it. Again, the immortality of the soul is a truth which the Psalmists in their highest moods had reached, which the Egyptian Priests and the Grecian Philosophers had accepted. He who was the Light of the World turned, indeed, the full rays of His lamp upon it, and revealed, as we shall see, its inner meaning; but the truth had already entered into the heart of man, and He illuminated and explained, rather than expressly discovered it.

But there are some principles which were so little known, or which existed in such feeble rudiments, before Christianity, that practically they were not known at all. Let us, in plain

words, try to state what they are. Some of them, through the influence of Christianity, have become so familiar to us that we shall, perhaps, be startled to hear them named as amongst its peculiar products. Some are even now so strange, so little recognised, that it may be almost difficult for us to acknowledge that they are Christian at all.

The fatherly character of God.

I. There is the principle of the universal benevolence of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, which is expressed in the words 'Father,' 'Our Father,' the belief that the relation of the Supreme Mind to man is that of a father. No doubt the word in relation to the Deity was known before, both in Jewish and heathen times; but it was not manifest—it was not brought to the front of religion as it was by Christianity. In the Old Testament it is used at most six times; but in the New Testament it is used as often as three hundred times. It is the mode in which the Supreme Ruler is almost uniformly addressed throughout the Gospels. It is the name by

which He is called in the one form of devotion furnished in the New Testament—the Lord's Prayer, or, as it is called in Latin, the *Pater Noster*. It expresses the belief that, as in the case of a father and his children, so in the Divine government of the world there is much which we cannot understand. In this obscurity we must humbly acquiesce. It expresses also that the main direction and purpose of this government is for our good. In this hope is our consolation.

The universality of Religion.

II. It is a corresponding truth that there is not only a universal Deity, but a common humanity; in other words, there is something in every race of men which attracts the Divine good-will towards them. In the old heathen religions each country had its own deity, each deity had its own country—gods of Troy, gods of Greece, gods of Rome; and in the Jewish religion, God for a long time and in many aspects was regarded only as the God of the people of Israel. But with Christianity all this was changed. The truth of the univer-

sality of God's care for man, and of the universality of a capacity for true religion in man, was known in some degree to some of the Jewish prophets; and it was expressed in one striking sentence by Alexander the Great, when he said, 'God is the common father 'of all men, especially of the best men.' But it was only placed in the forefront of religious doctrine when Christianity was revealed. Read the description of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and also the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Read the twice, thrice repeated fundamental truth—the dogma, if we choose to call it so—pervading the whole of the New Testament, 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, 'but he that doeth the will of my Father'—and 'In every nation 'he that feareth God and 'doeth righteousness is accepted of God,'—and 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' It was the principle not of absolute equality or uniformity amongst the various races and characters of men, but of the equality of the

Divine regard to human virtue in all these various characters and races. The supreme object of our worship was henceforth known as the God, not of Judaism only, not of Christianity only, but of all good men, and, as far as there is any goodness in them, of all men throughout the world.

Identification of Religion and Morality.

III. Running parallel with this is the principle that in the Christian dispensation morality is religion and religion morality, or (if we prefer so to express it) that religion is the sanctification of morality, and morality is the action of religion. This had no doubt been foreshadowed by the warnings of the Jewish prophets, and by the aspirations of Grecian philosophers and poets, but it was through the teaching of Christianity that it first assumed paramount importance. However much in the various churches correct opinion, or correct ceremonial, or decoration of churches, or veneration of priesthoods, or ecclesiastical independence, have taken the place of morality, and however enormous the crimes which have been perpetrated in the name

of religion, still the better and wiser spirits in every age of Christendom have recognised the fact that the original principles of our faith teach exactly the reverse. Read the description in the Beatitudes of those that are truly happy. Read the Two great commandments, in which our Founder said that the whole of His religion consisted. Read the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which St. Paul declared that, compared with Charity or Philanthropy, all perceptions of theoretical truth, all manifestations of devotional zeal, are as nothing. We thus see how in each of these original conceptions of Christianity, the moral elements of religion outweigh all others. We sometimes hear it said, that in this or that school, or in this or that system, morality may be taught, but not religion; or that unless religion is taught, it is useless to teach morality. There are, no doubt, elements in religion that are not necessarily contained in morality. But in the highest point of view the distinction fades away as we touch it. In

Paganism this might have been so. But in Christianity, morality is itself the innermost part of religion, is its very Holy of Holies.

The moral character of the Divinity.

IV. It is the goodness thus made most essential in the religious man, and in man altogether, which gives us the best conception of God. This principle no doubt existed in some degree in heathen religion, and to a large degree in the Jewish. But in the religion of Greece and Rome the perception of the moral perfection of the Divinity was liable to constant obscuration. The Homeric gods, as a general rule, were not better, but worse, than the Homeric heroes. The description of the Eternal in the Old Testament, again, was often too far removed from human thought to be represented to us in the form of human goodness. But the Christian idea of God was nothing else than the perfection of virtue and wisdom. There are not many definitions of the Supreme Being in the New Testament, but they are mostly of this kind, 'God is love; God is light;' and when to this we add that the Founder of our

religion is set before us, not only as an example of humanity, but as the representation and personification of Divinity, this truth concerning the moral nature of the Divine essence attains a vividness and power which has never been reached in any other faith. In all the various theories concerning the nature of Christ, if not equally, at any rate in a predominant and impressive form, the chief aspect in which He is set before us is as a mirror in which we see the perfection of the Deity. The more human the representation of His virtues, the more we feel the divine character of the mission entrusted to Him. The more attractive and persuasive to all our moral convictions, so much the more we feel that He has disclosed to us the secret of the Invisible and Eternal mind.

The special virtues of Christianity, Charity, Purity, Truthfulness, Humility.

V. But it is not enough that there should be this general identification of morality with religion, or this identification of perfect human goodness with the Divine nature. We have to ask what are the special points of goodness on which Christianity lays the chief stress. The

chief virtues of Greek morality were fortitude, wisdom, self-control, and justice; of the ancient Roman religion, patriotism, and imperial courage; of the Hebrew religion, resignation, reverence, and faith. All these several virtues have their places in Christianity; but there are other moral gifts which shine with the most transcendent glory in the New Testament. The main characteristics of the Founder of our religion and of His disciples are kindness, universal kindness and beneficence, to which is given the new name of *grace*, *love*, or *charity* : purity in word and deed, to which is given the new name of *holiness*, or consecration to God; absolute sincerity, of which the very word *Truth* became a synonym of the Founder's life—*humility* and lowliness for which neither Greek nor Latin had any adequate expression—these were the principles which, in the Epistles, were deemed to be essentially Christian, and which in the Gospels were called divine.

Self-sacrifice.

VI. There is the method by which these qualities, whether in God or man, were to be

propagated and extended in the world. One is the process which regards the individual himself—it is self-abnegation; that is, the constant sacrifice of the lower part of his nature to the highest and best. In every one of us there is this higher and this lower nature. It is for the disciples of our Master to endeavour to find out, what is the better part, what is the one thing needful, and to be assured that for this a transformation, a transfiguration, a regeneration, of the soul is necessary. It is, in other words, the constant renunciation of that which is behind, the perpetual reaching forward to that which is before, the noble ambition which is satisfied with nothing less than the highest ideal. This sense of the need of an endless moral renovation and progress, this dissatisfaction with the littleness and meanness of things earthly and commonplace, and striving after things above us—this is what is called in the New Testament by many names, all meaning the same thing: 'Conversion,' 'Repentance,' 'the Second Birth,' 'the Cross,'

'the Grave,' 'the Resurrection,' 'the New Life,' a 'Spiritual Mind.' Of this heathen moralists speak but little; even the Jewish psalmists and prophets only in their loftiest flights. But of this the New Testament is full. It is the forgiveness of sins, of which the most consummate picture is given in the story of the Prodigal Son. It is described with a peculiar metaphor in the Epistles by the word 'edification,' which means the building up of one storey above another in the moral fabric of the soul. It is the imagery of the new heaven and the new earth which fills the visions of the Apocalypse.

The reversal of superficial judgments.

VII. This leads us to the mode of looking at our fellow men, and the judgment we are to pronounce upon them. It may be called the method, the judgment of surprises. The principle of the New Testament is that the characters of those of whom we should least expect a great future are those in whom we shall sometimes most surely find it. The irregular and despised publican often comes before the correct Pharisee, the generous pro-

digal before the complacent elder brother, the repentant Magdalene before the supercilious host, the outcast heathen and heretical Samaritan before the orthodox Jew—the first last and the last first. On this widely ramifying experience, which cuts across the grain of so many commonplace prejudices, both of the ancient and modern world, is built up the whole idea of the Friend of sinners, the Shepherd of the lost sheep, the Leader of the Christian chivalry, the champion of the weak, the defender of the oppressed, the refuge of the helpless. In it is contained, so to speak, the romance, the poetry of the Gospel. This it is which makes it especially a Gospel to the poor even more than the rich, the Gospel to the Gentile even more than to the Jew, the Gospel to little children even more than to theologians, the Gospel, one may sometimes say, to the heathen and misbeliever even more than to the Christian. This is not the way of other religions; this has often not been the way of the Christian religion; but it was in the beginning, and may

yet, in the end, be the way of the religion of Jesus Christ.

The identification of things secular and things sacred.

VIII. This leads us to yet another kindred principle. It is that which is held with such tenacity by a gifted person lately withdrawn from amongst us—Charles Kingsley—the doctrine, namely, that the whole world is God's world, and not the devil's. There were moments when this was taught both by Hebrew and by Greek, but it was reserved for Christianity to set it forth in its most commanding and persuasive form. Alone of the founders of religions, our Founder was no hermit, no ascetic, no isolated visionary, no armed soldier. He lived a social happy life with the sons and daughters of men, eating and drinking, delighting in the merry faces of little children, considering the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, making no distinction—except for the sake of tender scruples—between Christian and heathen, between the world and the Church. And as He was in His life so were His first followers in their teaching. Of all created

things which God had cleansed there was not one that St. Peter was allowed to call common or unclean. Amongst all the institutions of the earth, there is none which St. Paul regards with so much reverential awe as the laws of the heathen Roman empire. Amongst all the predictions of St. John, none is more majestic than that which declares that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ. The identification of things secular with things sacred, the refusal to acknowledge anything as supremely sacred except what is good, or essentially profane except what is sinful—this is the wide-reaching principle of the Gospel which strikes at the root of a thousand superstitions, and is the fruitful source of a thousand truths. It carries with it the hope of the final triumph of good over evil. It carries with it the germ of all modern philosophy, modern art, and statesmanship. This is the element which liberates, redeems, and purifies both the Church and the world.

IX. Along with this there is the principle

that the darkest and dreariest side of human life has also a glorious and divine aspect. Sorrow, suffering, pain, and death—all those evils of which the existence and the very thought shake the faith, and try the patience, and overcloud the serenity even of the best, and which in the Jewish and in Pagan religions were for the most part regarded as curses and penalties, as signs of wrath, as works of the Evil Spirit—all these are intended by the Christian Religion to be so transfigured as to appear, if not as blessings, yet, at least, as the channels of blessings, if not as direct gifts of Divine Love yet as opportunities for working out the purposes of that Divine Love to the human race. The rude manger of Bethlehem, the reproaches of Nazareth, the hardships of Capernaum, the tears of Bethany, the Cross of Calvary, are so many expressions of what Goethe called 'the Divine depth of sorrow,' out of which, as out of all sorrow and pain, is to be wrought the improvement, the redemption, the regeneration, the purification of mankind. Con-

The moral use of sorrow.

trast the Prometheus of Æschylus, contrast the riddle of the Book of Job with the unhesitating, unswerving determination of the Gospel story, to glorify humiliation, bereavement, and grief. This is the peculiarity of Christianity which was but seen afar off by Hebrew prophet or Grecian seer, but which, even in the worst corruptions of Christian faith, has retained its hold on the human spirit. Even were there no Christian memorial left in St. Andrew's but that solitary stone fragment in the court of St. Mary's College, which contains the rude likeness of the pierced Hands, and pierced Feet, and pierced Heart, we might reconstruct from it one of the most peculiar and supernatural elements of the Christian religion.

The spiritual character of Religion.

X. This leads us to the principle that the religious life in the soul is spiritual, that it depends not on material, or formal, or technical questions of any kind, but on its connection with the invisible spirit of man and with the invisible spirit of God. Hence the definition that 'God is Spirit,' and that His

true worship is in the spirit. Hence the constant use of parables in our Saviour's teaching, that we might always be taught to turn from the letter to the spirit, to remember that the spirit, even in sacred writings, is greater than the letter. Hence the absence of any form of ritual or any form of government prescribed in the New Testament. Hence the direction of prayer not to physical, but to moral, aims. Hence the persistent command to look from the outward to the inward, from the outside to the inside, from the act to the motive, from external and particular words and deeds to the character as a whole, from the things which are seen to the things which are unseen, from the material and the local to the Eternal which belongs to all time and all space. The arts and courtesies of life have their own value; but that value is as nothing compared with a high, honourable, upright course of life. The splendour or the simplicity of worship, the excellence of music, or the beauty of architecture, have their own attraction for

the truly spiritual mind. But compared with duty — compared with forbearance, humility, and truth — they have in the judgment of the Supreme Mind very slight attraction indeed. Hence, again, the new light thrown by Christianity, as we said at the outset, on the doctrine of immortality, the new solution of the perplexing difficulties concerning a future state; it is the principle that it rests on the spiritual communion with the Eternal. The silence concerning all details, combined with the clearness of general conviction which pervades the New Testament on the divine persistence of the spirit after death, is the crowning consolation that we have won from the Evangelic and Apostolic account of the Resurrection and of Heaven.

These, then, are the ten chief inward principles which lie behind all the facts, institutions, and history of Christianity, which would not, so far as we know, have struck root in the world at all but for the coming of Christianity, and which, wherever they are found

bearing fruit, constitute a Christian, whatever be the outward profession; which, wherever they are not found, cause a failure, a falling short of the privileges and the consolations of Christianity. These ten principles let us, for the sake of clearness, briefly repeat. They are —Firstly, the universal benevolence of God as our Father; secondly, the universal capacity for religion in mankind as His children; thirdly, the identification of religion with morality; fourthly, the identification of moral goodness with the Divine nature; fifthly, the supreme importance of charity, purity, truth, and humility; sixthly, the necessity and the possibility of continued progress, both in the individual and in the race; seventhly, the reversal of the superficial judgments of the world; eighthly, the identification of things secular and things sacred; ninthly, the divinity of sorrow and suffering; and, tenthly, the spiritual character of true religion, both in worship and in doctrine.

There are three observations which I have to make on the enumeration of these prin-

Compatibility of these principles with the various forms of Christianity.

ciples before I conclude. First, the enforcement of these principles does not necessarily supersede or conflict with the various doctrines or institutions which any of us, in our several sects or churches, may have learnt in childhood, manhood, or old age. What we ought to understand is that these principles lie behind and above the more technical and outward manifestations of religion. Turn them, if we like, into other phrases. Clothe them, if we will, in more ordinary forms of speech. The words here used to express them are perhaps not better—perhaps are worse—than those which others may choose for themselves. But at any rate, they may serve as touch-stones to enable us to know whether we have grasped the vital substance of faith which we all believe that we have in common, or whether we are merely repeating words by rote, and contenting ourselves with the husks and shells—with the beggarly elements of Judaism and heathenism. Somewhere or other, in our conceptions of Christianity, we must find room for these

fundamental principles; or else we shall have missed some of the main purposes for which Christianity was given to us.

Secondly, to some of us the thought that these ten principles, or something like these ten principles, are amongst the chief products of our religion, may perchance give us a new ground for the hope that is in us—a pledge that the Christian religion is not dead or dying, but is still instinct with immortal life. No doubt the human intellect and the human conscience do themselves occasionally suffer relapses. The supply of lofty souls and great intelligences may sometimes dwindle, peak, and pine. And with that decay those principles which we have enumerated may for a time decay also. But there is an inextinguishable source of life in the very width and depth of their nature, and in the conviction that, even if they should for a time be forced out of and beyond the Christian pale, they will strike root elsewhere, and that as they were the Alpha, the beginning, of the education of Christendom, so also they will be the Omega,

The pledges of the perpetuity of Christianity.

its end. They form, indeed, the tissue of our common Christianity, of the best heritage of the human race; and this common Christianity, so viewed, has been proved by experience to be, at least, as definite, precise, and intelligible as any of the special forms in which it has been clothed, for it is the Christianity of little children, and of the very poor; it is the Christianity of the greatest philosophers; it is the Christianity of states and statesmen.

Personal influence the strength of these principles.

There is, finally, this supreme stimulus to our hope; that all these principles incontestably made their way, not by being enunciated as dry and formal statements, nor by outward authority, nor by the sword of conquerors, but by being personified, exemplified, made flesh and blood in Him who was manifested on earth chiefly in these very things. As it was this living personal interest which gave them their first chance, so it is that which has ever since maintained their universal capability of application. It is difficult to express this aspect

of the subject better than in those fine lines of the Poet Laureate in his 'In Memoriam':—

> We yield all blessings to the name
> Of Him who made them current coin;
> Where Truth in closest words shall fail,
> Yet Truth, embodied in a tale,
> Shall enter in at lowly doors.
> And so the Word had breath, and unwrought
> With human hands, the creed of creeds,
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought.

Yes; and the poet might have added—'more strong than all philosophic or theologic 'thought.' And this is the crowning peculiarity of the religion of Christ—namely, its attestation of the value, the widely-extended influence of character, of personal interest. Not by outward acts, or institutions, or signs of power, but by being what He was has the history of Jesus Christ retained its hold on mankind. Not by power or riches or ability, but by being what we, each of us, by God's grace, may be, shall we carry out this work. Look at the effect of any one single human soul, filled with any one of the principles which we have de-

scribed — filled with truthfulness, graciousness, or perception of the true wants and needs of this or that time or nation. Think of the effect on the world if, in even a few instances, some such man or woman were planted in any neighbourhood, in any nation, in any Church. Christianity is what it is by the fact that there was once lived upon earth a sacred and divine Life—sacred and divine because it was supremely, superhumanly, and transcendently good; because it was above the limitations of time, country, and party; because it revealed to mankind the fullest insight into the heart of the Eternal and Supreme; and Christianity shall be what it may yet become, in proportion as that Life, or anything like it, is lived over again, in the personal example and influence of any human soul that aspires towards the Perfect Ideal which is represented not in the name, but in the power, not in the letter, but in the spirit, of Jesus Christ.

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE TOWN CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW'S

ON AUGUST 25, 1872

Being the Tercentenary of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew

ST. LUKE X. 27.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

THERE are doubtless many not only here but in many lands and churches elsewhere who will be reminded that yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow form the anniversary of a dreadful crime which, exactly 300 years ago, darkened the face of Christendom. The Feast of St. Bartholomew is one of those days of which the recollection is confined to the calendar of no single Church; but it is not as the day of the holy and blameless apostle, but as a 'day of 'trouble and distress, as a day of darkness and 'gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,' bearing with it the heavy burden of the cruel Massacre[1] in which, in these and the following

[1] For the most careful and exact analysis of the amount of blame and complicity shared by the different European nations and by the various branches of the Roman Catholic Church in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, see a well-known article—ascribed to a distinguished member of that Church—in the *North British Review* of October 1869, pp. 31–70.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

days of August, in the year 1572, thousands of French Protestants perished by the hands of their fellow-countrymen. There are many reflections which this tercentenary might fitly recall to thoughtful men. We might regard it as a solemn warning against too great confidence in our own opinions—a striking proof of the acknowledged fallibility and failure of one who was then, and who is by many still believed to be, the chief pastor of Europe, who, if not before, immediately on hearing of it, expressly approved that dreadful crime. The medals which were struck in its honour, the pictures which still hang on the walls of the Vatican Palace, delineating its horrors as amongst the glories of the Papacy, are now disowned with shame and remorse by many members of the Roman Church itself. Or we might look back to it with thankfulness, as the extremest point to which the tide of intolerance, under the name of religion, has reached; and we might bless Almighty God that, although with many ebbs and flows, those bitter waters

have since that time (at least in their most violent form) been receding from the land which they then covered. Humanity and justice have, in this instance, triumphed over fanaticism and passion.

The sin of intolerance.

But there is a general reflection of a more practical kind. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew represents a sin which, though its darkest shadow rests on the Church of Rome and on the monarchy of France, has yet overcast Churches and kingdoms very far removed from Rome and from Paris. In England the name of itself recalls the mournful day on which 2,000 Nonconformists were, by the hardness of our forefathers, on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1662, estranged from the Church of England. And here in St. Andrew's it is impossible not to remember how deep and bloody are the stains which have been left by the like spirit of religious hatred in the precincts, now so peaceful and tranquil, of this ancient city. First, the murder of the earliest Protestant martyrs in Scotland—Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart;

then the savage vengeance on the Archbishop Cardinal Prelate who pronounced their doom; then the succession of Covenanters who, at least with the alleged sanction of another Archbishop of St. Andrew's, were doomed to torture, death, or exile; then the ruthless murder of that same Archbishop on Magus Moor, commemorated within this church; then the strange fate of those on that same spot who, whether condemned as murderers or venerated as martyrs, were alike the victims of the same fierce and reckless zeal. And although the most hateful forms of religious intolerance have ceased, yet no one who looks round on the dissensions and the suspicions with which Christians still regard each other can feel sure that we are altogether free from its contagion. On this day, therefore, the Church of Christ, whether Roman or Protestant, whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian, may well veil its head under a sense of common guilt, and, as on a day of deep humiliation, ask by what blessed influences we, in these later days, have been raised in this respect above our fathers,

and how for the future the first symptoms of this malignant tendency may be counteracted.

Primary truths the remedy to intolerance.

There are many and various answers which may be given to this question. I propose to take one which is suggested by the chapter just read from [1] the Gospel of St. Luke. In a well-known discourse by a famous divine dear to the Church of Scotland, dear to the city of St. Andrew's, it was once urged that the best mode of extirpating sin was by what he well called 'the expulsive power of a new affection.' So it is in regard to that mixed atmosphere of sin and folly from which has sprung the fierce fanaticism of former or of present times. That is best dispelled by the expulsive power of a new truth, or rather, let us say, by the expulsive force of one of those old, very old truths which belong to the original essence of Christianity, but which have often been thrust aside by secondary and inferior doctrines that have sprung up beside them. If we look over the persecutions which

[1] The Gospel for the 13th Sunday after Trinity.

have in former times devastated Churches and kingdoms, we shall find that all, or almost all, have been carried on in defence of doctrines which the Bible, or which the calmer judgment of a later time, pronounced to be secondary—few, very few, in defence of those greater doctrines which the Bible and the judgment of the wisest men of all ages have acknowledged to be primary and fundamental. It is therefore, as the best antidote, as the best solution of those stormy strifes out of which arose the Massacre of St. Bartholomew and the blood-stained recollections of our own or other Churches, that I venture to fix your attention on the two great commandments which our Saviour Himself declared to be the sum and substance of saving doctrine. If we have these in their full meaning rooted in our minds, then we shall be best secured from all danger of intolerance on the one hand, and of indifference on the other. The truth of truths involved in them will most effectually drive out the master-falsehood, of which the Massacre of St. Bar-

tholomew was the outward expression. The righteous zeal which should be felt for them will most powerfully counteract the unrighteous zeal which Christendom this day deplores.

In order to understand these two great commandments fully, let us examine, first, What was the occasion of their delivery? secondly, What do they contain? and thirdly, What is their relation to the other parts of the Christian dispensation?

The two great commandments.

I. First, then, the manner and occasion of their delivery.

1. They were delivered, as we read in the Gospels, twice over. Once in answer to the question, 'Which is the great commandment 'of the law?' So we read in St. Matthew and St. Mark.[1] And at another time in answer to the question, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal 'life?' So we read in the text from St. Luke.[2] The scribe, according to St. Mark, asks, 'Which 'is the great commandment?' There are hun-

The occasion of their delivery.

[1] Matthew xxii. 36; Mark xii. 28.
[2] Luke x. 26.

dreds of commandments, there are hundreds of duties, there are hundreds of precepts and statements and doctrines in the Bible. Which of these is the most important? Our Saviour did not disdain to answer this question. He did not think it an answer to send away that scribe with the reply that all of these are equally important—that there is no difference between essential and unessential. He confirmed the plain truth of common sense, that there is a distinction even in sacred things; that we must even in these select; that there is a good, a better, and a best. That is what we learn from the first occasion when these commandments were given. It is our Blessed Lord's sanction of the principle of selection, of discrimination, of rightly 'dividing the Word of 'Truth.' And the second occasion is no less interesting. The lawyer in St. Luke asked, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He knew well what he was about. He did not ask, 'What am I to think?' or 'What am I to say?' or 'What am I to feel?' but 'What am I to

'do?' He knew something of the great doctrine everywhere proclaimed in the Bible, 'He that 'doeth righteousness is righteous.' He was only perplexed by wishing to know how he should do what was right. This principle, too, our Lord recognises. He sanctions the principle that to do is the great thing. He wishes to show what are the conditions of inheriting eternal life. 'This do, and thou shalt 'live.'

The form of their delivery.

2. And whence did He draw his answer, and in what form did He put it? This is expressed somewhat differently on the two occasions, but they both come to the same point. To the lawyer in St. Luke's Gospel the answer came not out of His own divine lips, but out of the lips of the questioner. He said to him, 'What is written in the law? 'How readest thou?'[1] In the case of the scribe in St. Mark's Gospel, although it is our Lord who there gives the commandments, yet there also they are immediately ratified, and, as it

[1] Luke x. 27.

were, adopted as something familiar by the scribe himself. 'Well, Master, thou hast said 'the truth.'[1] In each case, therefore, our Lord did that which is the true characteristic of every wise teacher; not so much to put knowledge and wisdom into His disciples, as to draw out of their hearts and minds whatever knowledge and wisdom was in them. Every one in every congregation has some kind of knowledge and consciousness of higher things. Far better that we should be made to find out that for ourselves, to teach it to ourselves, rather than that any one should bring it to us; or if any one does bring it to us, far better that, like the scribe, we should recognise the truth of it in ourselves, because of its convincing our own judgment and conscience, than merely take it in blind submission on the authority of some one else. 'Well, Master, thou hast said the truth.' This might have almost seemed a presumptuous mode of addressing our Divine Teacher; but it was a mode of address which He himself ap-

[1] Mark xii. 32, 33.

proved. 'Thou art not far,' He said, 'from the 'kingdom of God.' Thus, and thus only, does truth become part of ourselves. Unless we meet our teacher half-way, he can teach us almost nothing. God only helps those who help themselves; Christ only saves those who wish to be saved; wisdom comes only to those who 'cry after knowledge' and 'lift up their 'voices for understanding.'

The origin of the two commandments.

3. And, further, let us notice that even these two great commandments were not on these occasions invented for the first time by our Divine Lawgiver. He found them, as it were, pre-existing. He found each of them in the ancient Law, where they might have been found by those who chose to look for them, and where, in fact, they were found by those two scribes. What an example, also, is this of God's mode of teaching! Sometimes we may be alarmed at hearing that this or that precept and doctrine of the Gospel may be, or has been, expressed outside of the pale of Christendom —that the heathen poets and philosophers, or

perhaps the Jewish Talmud, contained before Christ came some of the words and precepts of the Gospel. Some there are who foolishly think that in this way the Gospel may be proved to be false; others there are who no less foolishly refuse to be told the fact, lest they should be tempted to think so too. But here, as everywhere, it is the truth itself, not the particular source from whence it comes, that claims our allegiance. It is divine, it is Christian, it is evangelical, because it is true. The wind of the Divine Spirit bloweth where it listeth. Thou canst not tell, thou needst not ask, whence it cometh or whither it goeth. The main thing is to hear the sound thereof, to see its effects, to feel its freshening breath, and to be moved by its stirring influences. Here, as elsewhere in His teaching, what our Lord did was to bring forth truth out of the vast treasure-house of things new and old—to divide the eternal from the temporal—to breathe new life and new spirit into old institutions and old words—to stamp and seal with His own divine

impress the true metal and coin, and so give it currency and circulation throughout the world. These two great commandments had lain for ages—one buried in the Book of Deuteronomy, the other in the Book of Leviticus—amongst hundreds of other precepts, some excellent, some insignificant, some entirely superseded. They had also, it may be, as in the minds of these two scribes, been lying dormant—known perhaps in this or that school, taught by this or that teacher, but lost in obscurity, apart from each other, overwhelmed by narrow interpretations. It was the magic of His divine word that called them into life, that brought together each to its proper mate, and wrote them on the hearts and the spirits of mankind for ever. 'Well, Master, thou hast said the truth.' Thou hast said what was, or what might have been, known before, but thou hast said it well —so well that it seems as if we now heard it for the first time.

I have thus dwelt on the mode of introducing these two commandments, because we

have here the best illustration of the method of Revelation; the best condemnation of that barbarian exclusiveness and ignorance which lies at the root of all persecution, and which it is the direct object of Christian civilisation to counteract and to regenerate.

Their contents.

II. We now pass to the contents of these two commandments. I will endeavour briefly to unfold their meaning word by word.

The first commandment.

1. The first commandment thus begins: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' One supreme affection is to rule our whole being—one, and one supreme. Whatsoever there may be of love and admiration kindled by all the various objects worthy of our earthly interest is gathered up in that great passion of the human soul which is called the Love of God. Any one who wishes to trace that passion to its source in human nature, and to see how reasonable it is—how natural an expansion, if one may so say, of our best affections—should read the discourse preached by one of the few preachers of Christendom who has been at

The love of God.

once a philosopher and theologian—Bishop Butler's Sermon on the Love of God. To feel that there is one Being supremely just and wise, through whom all the trials of this mortal life can be turned to our good; whose judgment is not in the least degree affected by the struggles of party or the respect of persons, or the honour, or praise, or fashion of the world; who sees things not as they seem to be, but as they really are: to reverence this Supreme Perfection because it is the perfection of all that is noble, generous, beautiful, wise, and just, in what we know among ourselves; to be content with nothing short of this in our ideal, our image of God; to feel that in growing like this ideal is our best happiness; that in entirely resigning ourselves to His justice and mercy is perfect peace—this, or something like to this—this, and nothing less than this—is to love the Lord our God.

The mode of loving God.

And what is meant by the other part of this first commandment?—'Thou shalt love Him 'with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

'with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' It means that in whatever measure we have attained to the love of God—that is, to the love of the Highest Goodness and Truth—we must carry out this not only into one part of our nature, but into all. It has been the chief source of all corruptions of religion, that those who have been religious have often brought to it but one element, but one single part of their nature. A strong religious imagination, a strong religious affection, may often be seen side by side with a mind left altogether weak and uncultivated. A strong logical belief may be seen unsoftened by the genial influence of a loving heart and a heaven-aspiring soul. A strong will and a powerful fancy may be seen side by side with a reckless disregard of prudence and of common sense. Every one of these forms is but the half or the quarter of religion. But God cannot be divided. He is One God, not many. He must be served by all our nature, not by parts of it. The intellect must seek truth with undivided, fearless zeal;

else we do not serve God with our whole mind and understanding. The bodily powers must be guarded and saved for the healthy discharge of all that Providence requires of us in our passage through life; else we do not serve Him with our whole strength. The affections must be kept fresh and pure; else we do not serve Him with our whole heart. The conscience must not have stained itself with secret sins, unworthy transactions, and false pretences, else we do not serve Him with our whole soul. There was an old barbarian chief who, when he was baptized, kept his right arm out of the water, that he might still work his deeds of blood. That is the likeness of the imperfect religion of many Christians. That is what they did who, of old, as on this day, in their zeal for religion, broke their plighted faith, did despite to their natural affections, disregarded the laws of kinship and country, and honour and mercy. It is this shutting up of religion into one corner of our being which is the cause why many good men are not better, why

many religious men have been so unwise, why the world seems often more charitable than the Church, why many a saint has been untruthful, why many a faithful believer has been selfish or cruel, why many an earnest seeker after truth has been irreverent and undevout, why many a generous temper has been coupled with self-indulgence and coarseness. The true religion of Jesus Christ our Saviour is that which penetrates, and which receives, all the warmth of the heart, and all the elevation of the soul, and all the energies of the understanding, and all the strength of the will.

The second commandment.

2. And now, what is the second great commandment? 'It is like to the first.' It is the chief mode of fulfilling the first. 'Thou shalt 'love thy neighbour as thyself.' Here, again, there are two points which bring out its full force.

The measure of love to others.

First, what is the measure of the love we owe to others? It is the measure of what we think is owing to ourselves. 'Love him as 'thyself.' Observe, if I may use such a word,

the equity of this divine rule. It makes us the judge of what we ought to do. It imposes upon us no duty that we have not already acknowledged for ourselves. Every one of us knows how painful it is to be called by malicious names, to have his character undermined by false insinuations, to be overreached in a bargain, to be neglected by those who rise in life, to be thrust on one side by those who have stronger wills and stouter hearts. Every one knows also the pleasure of receiving a kind look, a warm greeting, a hand held out to help in distress, a difficulty solved, a higher hope revealed for this world or the next. By that pain and by that pleasure let us judge what we should do to others. This is the root of all Christian charity, of all Christian forgiveness, of all Christian justice, of all Christian toleration. Had this command sunk deep into the heart of Christendom, how many a foolish quarrel might have been averted, how many a needless war might have been arrested, and (to apply it to the anniversary of this day) how impossible would

have been most of the bloody persecutions which have been the shame of the Christian Churches!

The object of our love.

And, secondly, observe the object towards which this love is to extend—'Thy neighbour.' Here, again, there is, so to speak, a common sense and equity—what has been well called 'the sweet reasonableness,'—of Christ our Saviour. It is not an indiscriminate command to love, to show kindness to everybody and to all mankind. That, in its literal sense, would be impossible. But it is to love 'our neighbour.' And what is meant by our neighbour we cannot doubt, because of the interpretation which our Lord has put upon it in this very chapter. It is every one with whom we are brought into contact. First of all, he is literally our neighbour who is next to us in our own family and household—husband to wife, wife to husband, parent to child, brother to sister, master to servant, servant to master. Then, it is he who is close to us, in our own neighbourhood, in our own town, in our own parish, in our own street. With these all true charity begins. To love

and to be kind to these is the very beginning of all true religion. But besides these, as our Lord teaches, it is every one who is thrown across our path by the changes and chances of life—he or she, whosoever it be, whom we have any means of helping—the unfortunate sufferer whom we may meet in travelling, the deserted friend whom no one else cares to look after. And, whether of those more distant or those nearer neighbours, our Lord gives us yet that further explanation in the Parable of the Good Samaritan—namely, that in asking 'who is our 'neighbour,' we must put aside all questions of race, country, or even religion. Whoever it be that we have an opportunity of helping, there is our neighbour, however much we may have been divided from him by other matters—whether, like the man that fell among thieves, he is a Jew, and you are a Samaritan, or he a Samaritan and you a Jew, he a Presbyterian and you an Episcopalian, he a Nonconformist and you a Churchman, he a Roman Catholic and you a Protestant, he of one race and you

of another, he of one creed and you of another, he of one party and you of another—he, whosoever he be, if he is in difficulty and needs your aid, and you are able to aid him—he deserves and demands all the same justice and compassion that you would gladly render to him if he were of the same party, of the same Church, of the same country, of the same opinions as yourself. Nay, further, as the Parable implies, he may be your neighbour in a yet closer sense. He, like the good Samaritan, though belonging to another Church and creed, may yet have virtues which we have not, and which in our own Church and circle we do not find. These virtues are what our Lord's commandment calls upon us to recognise, and, by recognising, tears to pieces the very groundwork and framework of the old anathemas and persecutions for different opinions, because it shows that there is in the sight of God something deeper than opinion, even as blood is thicker than water, and as goodness is better than orthodoxy, and as charity is greater than faith. If there

be any doctrine or dogma in the Christian religion on which our Lord lays special stress, it is the doctrine and dogma contained in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. How vast a difference would have been made in the whole face and history of Christendom had the catholic, the evangelical truth expressed in this Parable taken its proper place—we may almost say, had it been recognised at all in the creeds and confessions, not to speak of the practice, of Christian Churches! Whenever this shall be, and in proportion as this has been received, there will indeed be, and there has been, the expulsive force of a very new and of a very strong affection, of a very old and of a very fundamental truth, which would teach us often and often that he whom we have regarded as our worst enemy is really the true Christian's next-door neighbour.

Importance of the two commandments.

III. And now, thirdly, What is the relation of these two commandments to the other parts of religion and of human life? Our Saviour Himself has told us that these are the greatest

of all. He has told us that on these the rest of God's revelation depends. 'On these hang 'all the Law and the Prophets.' He tells us that by keeping these two commandments we inherit the greatest of all gifts. 'This do, and 'thou shalt live.' It is hardly possible to imagine stronger expressions than these. It was once said—and we can hardly be surprised at the saying—by an eminent statesman of another country, who had become dissatisfied with many existing forms of belief, 'When any Church 'shall inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualifica- 'tion for membership, these two great command- 'ments of our Saviour, that Church will I join at 'once with all my heart and with all my soul.' That hope, that wish, as thus expressed, is doubtless exaggerated. In our complex state of society, it seems out of the question that so simple and sublime a confession of faith should ever become practicable. But, nevertheless, it is clear that what was intended in that saying is true. Whenever any Church in truth and in spirit puts forward these two commandments

as that which is of supreme importance, as that in comparison with which all else is unimportant, as that to which all else tends, for the sake of which all else is done—any Church so believing and so acting, any Christian so believing and so acting, takes at once the first place amongst Churches and the first place amongst Christians, because such Churches and such Christians would most fully have embraced the mind and the intention of our Divine Founder. Doubtless, as I have said, we are perplexed when we think, on the one hand, of this truth in all its grand simplicity, and when we think, on the other hand, of the immense system of institutions, beliefs, and forms which exist, and, so far as we can foresee, must always continue to exist, in every Church and every State of Christendom. It was observed by Coleridge that when a man is told that religion and morality are summed up in the two great commandments, he is ready to say, like one who first beholds

the sea, 'Is this the mighty ocean—is this all?' Yes, it is all; but what an all? We know well at St. Andrew's what is the view of the ocean. We look out from these shores on that vacant expanse, with its boundless horizon, with its everlasting succession of ebb and tide, and we might perhaps ask, What is this barren sea to us? How vague, how indefinite, how broad, how monotonous! Yet look closer. It is the scene on which sunlight and moonlight, cloud and shadow, storm and calm, are for ever playing. It has been the chosen field for the enterprise, for the faith, for the charity of mankind. It is the highway for the union of nations and the enlargement of Churches. It is the bulwark of freedom, and the home of mighty fleets, and the nurse of swarming cities. And so these two commandments. They seem at first sight vacant, vague, and indefinite; but let us trust ourselves to them, let us launch out upon them, let us explore their innermost recesses, let us sound their depths, and we shall find that they call forth all the arts and appliances of Christian

life; that they will carry us round the world and beyond it.

'To love the Lord our God with all our 'heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and 'with all our strength.'—What new spheres of thought and activity ought this to open to us, when thoroughly studied! It is in proportion as the Bible teaches us the true perfections of God that it becomes to us the Book of God; it is in proportion as the Gospel discloses to us those perfections in the most endearing and the most intelligible forms that it becomes to us the revelation of God in Christ; it is in proportion as our hearts and consciences are filled from the Fountain of all goodness that we are able to enter into the true essence of God, who being Spirit can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth. It is, or it ought to be, for the sake of these great commandments that we value and strive to improve the sanctifying and elevating influences of Christian worship, Christian civilisation, Christian friendship, Christian homes, and Christian education. It is for the sake

of better understanding what God is, and how He wishes us to serve Him, that we value those indications of His Will which He has left us in the sure footsteps of science, in the manifold workings of history, of art, and of poetry, and of all the various gifts and graces which He has bestowed on earth and on man. 'Let no man,' says Lord Bacon—'let no man 'out of weak conceit of sobriety or ill-applied 'moderation think or maintain that a man can 'search too far, or be too well supplied, in the 'Book of God's Word or the Book of God's 'works.' That is one result of the endeavour to love God with all our understanding and with all our soul.

And, again, 'to love our neighbour as our-'selves.' What a world of Christian duty is here disclosed! How eagerly, for the sake of better serving our neighbours, should we welcome any one who will tell us what is the best and safest mode of administering charity, the best mode of education, the best method of suppressing intemperance and vice. How eagerly should we

cultivate the opportunities which God has given us, not for keeping men apart, but for bringing them together; how anxiously we should desire to understand the character of neighbouring nations, neighbouring Churches, neighbouring friends, so as to avoid giving them needless offence—so as to bring out their best points and repress their worst, making our own knowledge of our own imperfections and faults the measure of the forbearance which we should exercise to others. How eagerly should we rejoice in every increase of the instruments that Christianity and civilisation employ for the advancement and progress of mankind. These are some of the means of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

And, finally, as at the beginning, so at the end of this discourse, let us observe that whilst all those other appliances of Christian life are useful and necessary for carrying out these two great commandments, yet still the fact, of which we are never to lose sight, is that these two commandments are the end, and all other things, however sacred and great, are the

means. We need not disparage any of those methods of keeping the commandments. Only let us remember that on the keeping of these two commandments, on this only, and on this sufficiently, if our Lord's words be true, depend the Law and the Prophets in the Old Testament, and Eternal Life in the New. We see that other commandments and other ordinances 'come to an end,' but these two are 'exceeding 'broad'—they have no end beyond themselves. They avoid details, even the details of the Ten Commandments. They contain only the largest and the most general principles; they leave the details to us. They lay down the direction, the motive, and the end of action. They appeal not to the sense of fear, or even of duty, but of affection. Duty is a hard task, but there is one word, as the heathen poet says, which makes all things easy—and that is 'Love.' There are many other passages both in the Old and New Testament which, though expressed in different words, have the same meaning. It is these passages, these doctrines, which hold

the first place in the Christian dispensation. They are the governing principles of the Bible and of the Church. They are the key-notes of Revelation. Other passages, other truths, have their use, their significance, their beauty. But we cannot be mistaken in regarding these two commandments and their like as the chief of all. Such truths are the parts of the Christian revelation on which the wisest and best Christians of all ages have laid the most stress—on which the clamorous and contentious and violent Christians have laid the least stress. And thus it has come to pass that, on the one hand, in the long history of the past, they are unstained, or almost unstained, by any unholy associations of blood, or fraud, or party spirit. In behalf of these two commandments no Massacre of St. Bartholomew has been set on foot, no Archbishops and no Covenanters have been slaughtered. But, on the other hand, in the future, they, and the like truths, whether in the Gospels or the Epistles, demand, and may absorb, all the zeal and the enthusiasm that

ever were evoked by Catholic League or Protestant Covenant; and whenever that true zeal and enthusiasm are felt, then, as the fire of charcoal or the flames of sulphur wax pale and die out before the full light of the noonday sun, so the fire of ancient religious animosities and the anathemas of old theological odium will wax pale and die out in the light of the great Christian duties and the great Christian truths of the love of God and the love of man.

May I conclude by quoting a quaint poem —of which it is doubtful whether it was written by one of the earliest Deans of Westminster or by one of the earliest Scottish Reformers[1]— which expresses with singular felicity and clear discrimination the true proportion between profession and practice, be-

[1] 'The Wedderburnes and their Work,' by Professor Mitchell, of St. Andrew's. I have been informed by the Professor that it is doubtful whether the poem in question was originally written by Wedderburne, who was one of the Scottish exiles at Frankfort, or by Cox, Dean of Westminster in the reign of Edward VI. and afterwards Bishop of Ely.

tween doctrine and character, between good words and good works?—

'Say well' from 'do well' differs in letter;
'Say well' is good, but 'do well' is better.
'Say well' says godly, and helps to please,
But 'do well' lives godly, and gives the world ease.
'Say well' in danger of death is cold,
'Do well' is harness'd, and wondrous bold.
'Say well' to silence sometimes is bound,
But 'do well' is free in every stound.[1]
'Say well' has friends, some here some there,
But 'do well' is welcome everywhere.
By 'say well' many a one to God's Word cleaves,
But for lack of 'do well' it quickly leaves.
If 'say well' and 'do well' were joined in one frame,
Then all were done, all were won, and gotten were the game.

[1] Stound = stunde = hour.

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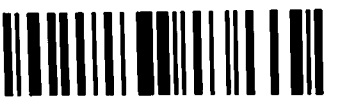
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